

Hafa Adai!

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## OPINION METER

**This week's poll:**  
Do you think there should have been a run-off in the non-voting delegate election, since none of the candidates won a majority of the votes?

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to cast your vote.

**70** without a  
government  
budget for  
FY 2009  
**DAYS**

INSIDE



## New Diversity

The new Miss France, born to an African-American mother and white French father, said she wants to advertise her country's diversity.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 21

'Conspiracy charge vs Villagomez not time-barred' PAGE 2

Band sets fundraising concert for Ballesteros. PAGE 6

## Muña: Aggreko extension possible



### LOST CHRISTMAS

Students at Grace Christian Academy perform their annual seasonal production Lost Christmas Friday last week. The approximately 200 students in the production have been preparing for about two months.

REY BELGADO

## Salas touts monument plan in NPR interview

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.  
[n\\_rodriguez@saipantribune.com](mailto:n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

Andrew Salas, one of the advocates of the Marianas Marine Monument being proposed by President Bush, was in Washington D.C. last week to discuss his views on the subject in an interview with a National Public Radio program.

Salas, a former CNMI congressman and current vice chair of the Friends of

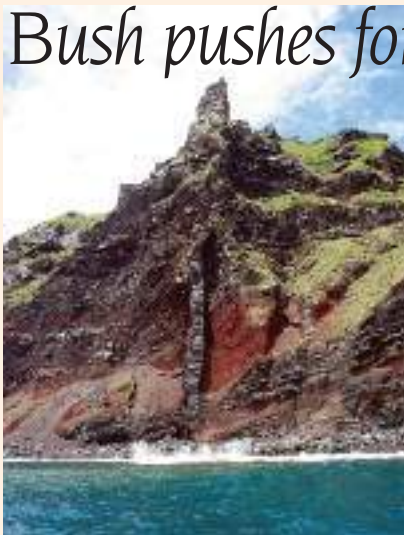


Salas

See SALAS on Page 4

## Bush pushes for marine reserves

By PETER N. SPOTTS  
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR



In its waning weeks, the Bush administration is sorting through options that could lead to the largest marine conservation reserves in United States history.

See BUSH on Page 4

The vertical column in the center of the image, called a dike, rises from below sea level to the pinnacle at the top of the ridge. Interlaid massive lavas (darker horizontal bands) and ash-rich lava units (reddish) are also exposed on the islets of Maug.

NOAA

By KRISTI EATON  
[kristi\\_eaton@saipantribune.com](mailto:kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com)  
REPORTER

CUC hopes to rehabilitate Power Plant 1 before the end of the year-long Aggreko contract in September 2009, but an extension might be necessary, CUC executive director Antonio Muña said.

Under the \$6 million contract, Aggreko provides 15 megawatts of emergency power to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. The contract allows for the possibility of a six-month extension.

"We are planning to try to get this done with Aggreko before the first



Muña

See MUÑA on Page 4

## Lizama top spender in '08 election

By AGNES E. DONATO  
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REPORTER

Retired judge Juan T. Lizama spent more on his campaign than did the top three vote-getters in the Northern Marianas' first-ever election for the congressional delegate, according to preliminary disclosures filed with the



Lizama

See LIZAMA on Page 4



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## Local

# 'Conspiracy charge vs Villagomez not time-barred'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

The conspiracy allegations in the indictment filed against Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez are not time-barred and that the U.S. government had in fact until 2013 to file the charges, according to assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley.

The indictment alleges one continuous conspiracy that began in February 1998, and lasted until at least Jan. 15, 2008, said O'Malley in the U.S. government's response to the motions to dismiss filed by Villagomez and co-defendant James A. Santos.

The prosecutor said the statu-

te of limitations began to run on Jan. 15, 2008, therefore the U.S. government had until Jan. 15, 2013 to indict.

The indictment against Villagomez and co-defendant was filed on July 22, 2008.

The indictment stated that, Villagomez, who was then the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director, conspired with James Santos in 1998 to arrange several large purchases of Rydlyme, a de-scaling agent, through a company he owned—sales that came with a 400-percent markup and violated conflict of interest laws.

According to the indictment, most of the 8,000 gallons of Ry-

dlyme sold under the deal were never used.

James Santos' ISLA Sales Micronesia profited \$280,000 through the plan from 1998 to 2000, the indictment said.

Villagomez, as lieutenant governor, sought to revive the Rydlyme sales scheme in 2007 and, this time, under a sole-source emergency contract with Joaquina Santos' company, Blue Pacific, filling the order, the indictment said, adding that the 2007 contract earned Blue Pacific \$120,000.

In the motions to dismiss joined by Joaquina Santos, Villagomez and James Santos insisted that the indictment is defective as the allegations in the conspiracy charge are time-barred.

The defendants, through their respective lawyers, said the applicable statute of limitations of five years for a conspiracy bars any and all allegations and or counts that rely on the overt acts alleged by the U.S. government.

"The indictment does not contain a single allegation of any overt act or wrongdoing of defendant or any co-conspirator, between Jan. 4, 2000, and Aug. 7, 2007," said attorney David J. Lujan, who is lead counsel for

Villagomez.

Lujan said the U.S. government failed to allege a requisite overt act before the statute of limitations ran out on or around Jan. 4, 2005.

In response to the motions, O'Malley said the defendants' argument that, as a matter of law, the jury may not consider whether there was a single ongoing conspiracy dating back to 1998 "is without merit."

"Whether there was a single conspiracy or multiple conspiracies is a question of fact, reserved for determination by the jury," O'Malley pointed out.

The government lawyer said the indictment alleges that the 1998-2000 transactions involved the same scheme, activities, goals, and were under the same "overall agreement" as the 2007 transaction.

O'Malley said the indictment also alleges that the same central actors—Villagomez and James Santos—were involved in both the 1998-2000 transactions and the 2007 transaction, specifying that defendants Anthony C. Guerrero and Joaquina V. San-

## PSS, govt still talking utility bills

By **KRISTI EATON**  
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REPORTER

The Public School System and central government are still coming to a resolution on PSS' October 2006 utility bill.

The bill, totally more than \$414,000, is part of more than \$1 million that the school system owes the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. for past utility usage.

Up until October 2006, the government paid for PSS's utility usage, so CUC and PSS officials had earlier determined the government would pay for that portion of the debt. But at the October Board of Education meeting, Vice Chair Herman Guerrero said he was told PSS must pay the \$414,000.

Guerrero said they would be discussing the issue tomorrow at the Board's Fiscal, Personnel and Administration committee meeting.

"It is being discussed as it related to the appropriation measure that was recently passed by the Legislature late last week," Guerrero said in an e-mail.

The Legislature passed a budget of \$165.4-million budget for fiscal year 2009. Under the proposal, personnel costs will account for \$112.2 million, or about two-thirds, of the budget. The remainder will go to operations, \$43.7 million, and utilities, \$9.5 million.

tos participated only in the 2007 transaction.

"Assuming the government meets its burden at trial, reasonable jurors may find that there was one agreement which began with the 1998-2000 transactions and was reactivated in 2007, thus drawing the entire scheme within the statute of limitations," he said.

The hearing on the motions was set for Thursday, Dec. 11,

in the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

The indictment charged Villagomez, former Commerce Secretary James Santos, his wife Joaquina Santos, and former CUC executive director Anthony Guerrero with wire fraud, conspiracy, and theft involving federal funds.

Except for Guerrero, all defendants have pleaded not guilty.



### FIRST COMMERCIAL PILOT

CNMI's first elected non-voting Representative Gregorio "Kiili" Sablan congratulates Rota's first commercial pilot Francisco Sasakura Mendiola after the latter received a copy of a resolution from the Legislature during a ceremony at the Senate chamber on Dec. 2.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

## Competitive salaries in the US affect staff recruitment at DPH

By **NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.**  
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Health said it is striving to maintain full staffing of its healthcare workforce but the recruitment and retention of clinicians remain a challenge due to the competitive salaries in the U.S. mainland.

In its recently released 2008 Health Data Report, DPH said that current CNMI licensure regulations require physicians to hold U.S. or Canadian credentials in order to practice, "except under special circumstances."

The report noted that nursing is the only health profession on island that is available for formal training.

DPH said in its report that despite initial success in the number of associate degree prepared graduates that pass the NCLEX, a vast majority of nursing staff are foreign hired.

The data showed that of the total number of 164 licensed nurses at the Commonwealth Health Center, 133 are non-residents while 31 are residents. These include 115 registered nurse (101 nonresidents, 14 residents); 6 nurse midwives (3 nonresidents, 3 residents); 27 licensed practical nurses (26 nonresidents, 1 resident); and 16 nurse assistants (3 nonresidents, 13 residents).

The current number of DPH staff stands at 526, including 367 for the Division of Hospital, 113 for the Division of Public

Health, 26 for the Community Guidance Center, and six for the Medicaid Office.

Also included are 14 for the Medical Referral office on Saipan (5), Guam (4), and Hawaii (5). There is no staff for the referral office in the Philippines.

By position and employment status, the DPH has no current pathologist and radiologist.

The other medical providers with their number of staff are the following: Anesthesiologist (2), Ear/Nose/Throat (1), Emergency Medicine (5), Family Practice/Internal Medicine (8), Nephrologist (1), Obstetrics/Gynecologist (2), Orthopedic Surgeon (1), Surgeons (2), Pediatrician (5), Psychiatrist (1), Public Health Medical Doctor (1), and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner (2).

PIHOA-WHO Human Resources for Health Planning Project gave its recommendations in June this year on how to resolve the healthcare staffing issues.

These recommendations include increasing the promotion of health careers to students, expanding the nursing program, and increasing the use of Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Anesthetists.

Such recommendations are seen to help reduce the challenges the CNMI is facing in the hiring and retaining of qualified staff.

DPH vowed to support all efforts to increase training and capacity building of the local healthcare workforce.

### NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT/ NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING KALABERA CAVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MARPI, SAIPAN

Notice is hereby given that the Department of Public Works in conjunction with CRM, DPL, DEQ, HPO and FWL are making available for public review and comment a Draft Environmental Assessment Report (DEAR) prepared for the proposed Kalabera Cave Development Project proposed by the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Marianas Visitors Authority is the project sponsor. The project is federally funded by the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs for Capital Improvement Projects under Section 118 of Public Law 104-134, and is pursuant to Article XIV Section 3 of the NMI Constitution including the NMI Historic Preservation Act of 1982, Public Law 3-39.

The project is designed to meet or exceed the requirements of local and federal laws, and construction includes car and bus parking, pathway, resting house, house of prayer, pictograph Interpretive house, and cave interior lighting.

An Environmental Assessment Report (EAR), which is a written document that discusses the potential environmental effects of the project and feasible mitigation measures to reduce those effects to less-than-significant levels, is proposed for certification by the Commonwealth pursuant to the NEP A and NHP A Guidelines. Possible environmental impacts of this project include impacts upon or related to aesthetics, transportation, air quality, noise, cultural and historical resources, biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, hazardous materials, and public utilities and service systems. Responsible and trustee agencies and those who have already expressed an interest in this matter will automatically receive a copy of the Draft EAR; for other interested persons, copies of the Draft EAR may be requested from the Department of Public Works at the address and telephone number given below or from Herman B. Cabrera & Associates at the address and telephone number given below. The 30-day review period for the Draft EAR is from December 9 to January 9, 2009. During this period, comments may be submitted to the Department of Public Works at the address given below, in either writing or by e-mail, or comments may be made during the public hearing, the date and location of which is described below.

Said public hearing where all interested members of the public may attend and be heard will be held on Wednesday, the 31st day of December 2008, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at the Gregorio Camacho Elementary School Cafeteria in San Roque, Saipan. This hearing will be for acceptance of public comments on the Draft EAR by DPW staff or staff from Herman B. Cabrera & Associates. No decision regarding the project or certification of the EAR will be made at this meeting. A final decision on this project will be made at a future date at a meeting of the Department of Public Works, who would also consider certification of the EAR at that time. All persons interested in the matter may appear and be heard at this meeting.

Copies of the Draft EAR in spiral bound form may be obtained in person from: Department of Public Works  
Technical Service Division,  
Joeten Building, 2nd Floor,  
San Jose Village, Saipan, MP 96950.  
Tel: 670-234-9828/38

and

Herman B. Cabrera & Associates  
P.O. Box 501421 Garapan  
Village Saipan, MP 96950  
Attn: Herman B. Cabrera, AIA President  
E-Mail: hbcabrera@gmail.com  
Tel: 670-234-1778  
A copy will be charged at the nominal rate of \$0.20 per sheet.

A copy of the document may also be viewed at:

Joeten Kiyu Public Library  
Susupe Saipan, MP 96950

Comments on the Draft EAR should be submitted to the Department of Public Works or to Herman B. Cabrera & Associates at the e-mail address or his address above. Comments on the Draft EAR must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 9, 2009.



## Taotao Tano urges FBI to probe Fund

Local group Taotao Tano is asking for a federal investigation into the Retirement Fund's declining portfolio.

"This is a serious matter that must be taken into consideration for there is no immediate legitimate explanation of a threat of bankruptcy taking place in the very near future," president Gregorio Cruz Jr. wrote in a letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigations. "The management and care of one's contributions to the Retirement Fund ultimately lies within the agency itself and the answers to such unaccountability and responsibility must be addressed and sought out immediately to prevent such eminent threats of a complete loss of one's years of contribution to include those pending retirement and are still

employed and those who are retired and dependant of such retirement pensions."

Cruz said the group fears years of mismanagement, cover-ups and politics between the Fund and the government is now taking a toll.

"A few years ago the decline listed in the Retirement Funds portfolio was estimated depletion within 15 years. Last month we estimated based on Merrill Lynch's report at a Saipan Chamber of Commerce meeting to be 8 years, today it is estimated to be less than 4 years. This is a serious and everyone in our government is pointing fingers without immediate solutions or explanation of why, who and how it happened," Cruz wrote.

In November, Kenan Knieriem, first vice president and

account executive in charge of Merrill Lynch's Institutional Advisory Division, said if the NMI Retirement Fund had been funded properly, it would have been worth \$765 million at the end of 2007, based only on the return of assets. Instead, it was worth only \$474 million.

During the first week of November, the Fund was worth just \$330 million, according to Knieriem.

Last month Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo found the CNMI government and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial liable in the lawsuit filed by the Retirement Fund over the government's failure to remit the required employer contributions, now reportedly reaching over \$119.6 million. *(Kristi Eaton)*

## Warning out vs non-complying food stamp retailers

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Labor Deputy Secretary Cinta Kaipat has warned retail outlets that accept food stamps that the work permits of their alien workers will be cancelled if they don't comply with the regulations to employ at least one U.S. citizen.

Labor's requirement to hire one U.S. citizen took effect in June 2008 in an effort to open entry-level retail jobs for citizens, said Kaipat in her interim progress report to the Legislature on the implementation of Public Law 15-108.

Kaipat, as then representative, was the principal author of Public Law 15-108, the new labor reform law.

Kaipat said that Labor's Division of Employment Services has been systematically inspecting these retail outlets to determine whether they are complying with the hiring requirement.

She said their recent report shows that, of the 107 outlets on Saipan, 77 are compliant, three are not, and 27 have yet to be inspected. Of 11 establishments on Rota, two are compliant and nine have yet to be inspected. Of Tinian's seven outlets, one is compliant while six have yet to be checked.

Kaipat said Labor's Employment Services is following up with the non-compliant employers.

"If they are not in compliance by year-end, the Director of La-

bor will cancel the permits of all of their foreign workers for failure to comply with Commonwealth law," she added.

With respect to the automated processing of Labor applications, Kaipat said their automated processing system has allowed them to clean out the backlogs.

"We are now operating on a current basis. Applications are processed by the Labor Division in the week in which they are submitted," she said.

Kaipat said Immigration is somewhat behind now with respect to their part in the processing of applications "because they've lost employees and do not have the full benefits of an automated processing system as Labor does."

## Tax cut eyed for bulk motor fuel sellers

By **AGNES E. DONATO**  
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REPORTER

Businesses selling motor fuel in bulk quantities will get a tax cut under a bill now before the House of Representatives.

Rep. Ray N. Yumul has introduced legislation that would legally define bulk motor fuel vendors as wholesalers, thus making them eligible for special gross revenue tax rates.

In general, businesses pay an annual tax of up to 5 percent of their gross revenues. Wholesalers are taxed at a maximum of 2 percent of gross revenues.

If enacted, Yumul's bill will

benefit businesses that sell bulk motor fuel, to include regular and premium unleaded gasoline and diesel, to retail service stations, businesses and manufacturers. There are at least three businesses engaged in the sale of bulk motor fuel in the Commonwealth.

The measure states that these businesses deserve lower tax rates because they provide a service to the general businesses by selling and delivering at reduced wholesale prices motor fuel products to other businesses, thereby creating additional economic activities to include additional jobs and also [reduc-

ing] the importer's footprint by lessening involvement in competing in this market.

The bill also argues that most deliveries of bulk motor fuel are to large businesses, hotel, and manufacturers who then use the purchased fuel to power their generators. These businesses, according to the bill, are suffering from high fuel costs and the inability of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to accommodate them on the power grid.

The liquid fuel tax, which is paid by the importer at the rate of 15 cents a gallon, is not affected by the proposed legislation.

## House to congratulate new nurses

Lawmakers are poised to send formal congratulations to the students of Emmanuel College on their recent completion of an 11-month nursing program.

Rep. Justo S. Quitugua and three other members of the House of Representatives have sponsored a resolution to formally recognize the first group of 20 students who completed the vocational nursing program at Emmanuel College.

The students are Carla Avelista S. Agulto, Reyina

Kay K. Aldan, Vanessa P. Aldan, Angeline Marie J. Ayuyu, Ofelia A. Bautista, Carmel Joan Cabrera, Paz L. Echavez, Alice Figueroa, Anna Victoria Ga, Raelynn Quenna A. Iglesias, Shirley Litang, Joyce Macaranas, Prosha Briana H. Palacios, Brian G. Piteg, Mario Salilin, Sarah Jane Santos, Jed Sikyang, Jian Teng, Elaine Q. Terlaje, and Archival Velasco.

They comprise the college's first vocational nursing class. After undergoing 11 months

of classroom education and clinical training at the Commonwealth Health Center, the students were awarded their certificates of completion on Nov. 15, 2008 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa.

Emmanuel College was granted a three-year provisional license in April 2007, making it the first private post-secondary educational institution in the CNMI and Micronesia to offer an accelerated 11-month vocational nursing program. *(Agnes E. Donato)*



# 9th Year Anniversary Special

## Little Miss Jollibee-Saipan

*Invites everyone to join the fun on Coronation Night*  
**on December 10 at 5:30 p.m.**

**1** Britney Ann Tomokane

**2** Kristine Kate Fajardo

**3** Kai Vidal

**4** Marriane Camille Saavedra

**5** Elisha Gaile R. Posadas

**6** Bernadette C. Jacinto

**7** Ezra P. Rabauliman

**8** Angelica Rose Rico

**9** Angel Mae Oropesa

**10** Marianne Ellesse Corpus

**11** Alyssa Ashley C. Carag

**12** Mikaella S. Cunanan

**NEW** Serving Breakfast



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- Drive-Thru Customers with plate number ending in 9 will receive a gift (9am to 11am only)
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- Kids ages 1 to 9 yrs. old with same birthday as Jollibee (Dec. 10) will receive a special gift, just present a copy of your birth certificate.
- Mascot appearance at 11am - 12nn
- Raffle Drawing

**ALL NEW \$9.99ers**

Choice of any 2 different Supermeals



Spaghetti/Fiesta, corn and carrots, fruit salad, 1pc steak with rice and gravy



Spaghetti/Fiesta, corn and carrots, fruit salad, chicken strips with rice and gravy



Spaghetti/Fiesta, corn and carrots, fruit salad, 1pc chicken with rice and gravy

- Winners will receive cash prizes and gift items from Jollibee and gift certificates from our major sponsors.
- To cast your vote, just purchase Jollibee food products worth at least \$9.99 and above.

**Last day of voting is Dec. 10 at 12 nn.**

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## BUSH

From Page 1

At issue: Proposals to protect at least one of two vast reaches of ocean that host some of the most pristine coral-reef and under-sea mountain ecosystems in the Pacific. One candidate, a loose cluster of islands and atolls in the central Pacific called the Line Islands, covers a patch of ocean larger than Mexico. The other, a section of the Northern Mariana Islands, is larger than Arizona.

The administration has been heavily criticized for its stance on environmental issues such as global warming and for its last-minute efforts to ease some environmental regulations. So its interest in a bold marine-conservation move may seem surprising. But the president "has had a strong interest in the health of the oceans," says Dennis Heinemann, a senior vice president with Ocean Conservancy, a marine-conservation group in Washington.

In 2006, President Bush established a vast marine reserve along the northwest Hawaiian Islands, the Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument. The monument spans an area larger than all of the country's national parks combined.

It's unclear at the moment whether the White House will take the same regulatory approach now. Mr. Bush could establish vast no-take zones, perhaps with exceptions to allow indigenous people to fish there. Or, he could merely endorse the concept of preserving these areas and punt the decision to the incoming Obama administration.

Still, hopes are high that Bush will grant full protection to these areas. "The condition of the oceans is degrading, and it's really been degrading for coral reefs. It's important to preserve these last few relatively untouched parts of the ocean," Dr. Heinemann says.

The latest effort builds on the 2006 Hawaii designation, says Jay Nelson, who heads the global ocean legacy program at the Pew Environment Group in Washington. Following that designation, the White House asked federal agencies, nongovernment groups, and the research community for more candidates. These included deep-sea coral networks off the US Southeast Coast and a proposal to establish a string of marine protected areas along the continental shelf from Florida to Belize.

In the end, the Marianas and Line Islands were the last candidates standing.

The islands, atolls, and seamounts that would be conserved are remote.

But they may also represent unique opportunities for research. In addition to its reefs, a northern Marianas reserve would include a section of the Marianas Trench, formed by the collision of two plates of the Earth's crust and home to the deepest spot on the seafloor. The area hosts 19 species of whales and dolphins. Life thrives in the extreme environments around hydrothermal vents. The seascape includes enormous mud volcanoes and pools of boiling sulfur.

The Line Islands, meanwhile, are feeding stations for migratory fish with an unexpected twist on the traditional food pyramid. "It's an amazing inverted pyramid design," in which most living organisms sit atop the food chain instead of at the bottom, says Nancy Knowlton, a marine scientist with the Smithsonian Institution Museum of Natural History. Although organisms lower on the food chain are fewer, they reproduce more quickly and so can support a relatively large number of diners. The system gives researchers a good baseline to understand what coral-reef systems used to look like, she says.

The Line Islands also serve as a way station for 21 species of migratory birds and some 19 species of seabird, who come to feed as large fish on a feeding frenzy drive their prey to the

surface. "This shows a direct ecological connection between land and sea," notes William Chandler, vice president for government affairs at the Marine Conservation Biology Institute office in Washington.

The effort is drawing support from the tourist industry, who see the region's reefs as an asset that needs to be safeguarded, as well as from conservation groups and marine scientists.

But the proposal has generated its share of concerns. Some supporters worry that conservation measures won't be tight enough.

Meanwhile, locals have expressed concerns that restrictions will be too tight. Indigenous people in American Samoa and the Marianas were concerned they would be banned from fishing and other traditional practices. There are other worries about Washington impinging on undersea mining projects for minerals on the seafloor off

the Marianas Trench. These local concerns are being addressed, says James Connaughton, head of the president's Council on Environmental Quality.

"There are a lot of people who are not quite sure what we might or might not do who are envisioning the worst from their particular perspective," he says. The assessment team were able to reassure many people that the worst won't happen.

One concern shared by local fishermen and US Pentagon officials centered on navigation rights through any proposed reserve, particularly around the Marianas. But the president's directive to assess the potential marine reserve sites reaffirmed these navigation rights.

The White House faces a deadline of Inauguration Day next month for making any decision on the reserves. But many conservationists say they hope a decision comes by the end of the year.



The Uracas volcano.  
MARAMP CRUISE 2007

## LIZAMA

From Page 1

Federal Election Commission.

The pre-election financial reports, available on the FEC website, also reveal that Delegate-elect Gregorio Kilili Sablan needed less than \$15,000 to win the historic election.

As of Oct. 15, 2008, about three weeks before the election, Sablan had spent \$14,668 of the \$17,604 he had received from campaign contributors.

As previously reported, runner-up Pete A. Tenorio was in debt by \$4,175. The CNMI's resident representative to Washington, D.C., received net contributions of \$31,600 and posted net operating expenditures of \$37,650.

The campaign fund of television talk show host John Oliver Gonzales, who finished third in the congressional race, was short by \$12,504. Net contributions to his campaign totaled \$18,516, and his net operating expenditures amounted to \$15,502.

The largest spender of the four top candidates was Lizama, who reported total contributions of \$55,298 and net operating expenditures of \$52,143.

### Contributors

A review of the candidates' respective lists of contributors shows that Lizama funded his campaign mostly from his own pocket. The former judge reported having personally paid \$48,503—over 85 percent—of the total cost of his campaign. Other

individuals who contributed to his campaign were not named.

Sablan put \$150 into his own campaign. His wife Andrea, a sales manager at DFS Galleria on Saipan, contributed \$2,000 to Sablan's candidacy. Other individuals who helped fund Sablan's campaign include: attorney Edward Arriola, who contributed \$300; Bank of Guam chief executive officer and president Lourdes Guerrero, \$500; businessman Rick Kautz Jr., \$250; Saipan Shipping Co. manager Roman Palacios, \$300; Sen. Maria Pangelinan, \$500; and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr., \$200.

Sablan's campaign also received funds from Bert M. Sablan, \$380; Florence C. Sablan, \$300; businessman Nick Sablan, \$200; Carlsmith Law Office manager Ruth Sablan, \$350; businesswoman Becky Tenorio; businessman Juan S. Tenorio; and retiree Lucy Tenorio, \$300.

Sablan also received \$7,789 in unitemized contributions.

Gonzalez reported putting in \$1,600 from his own pocket and receiving \$13,097 from unnamed individual contributors. His wife, Charlene, gave \$1,297. Other contributors to Gonzales' campaign include: Department of Commerce's Magge Camacho, \$250; retiree Delfina Manibusan, \$425; attorney Edward Manibusan, \$1,139; and Joeten Enterprises president Annie T. Sablan, \$1,200.

As reported earlier, Tenorio spent \$10,227 out of his own pocket. The

NMI Republican Party paid \$2,500 to the campaign, and unitemized individual contributions totaled \$8,326. Individual contributors named in Tenorio's filing include: Northern Marianas College dean Felicitas Abraham, \$1,225; retiree Isamu Abraham, \$400; former CNMI Lt. governor Francisco C. Ada, \$500; Washington, DC-based attorney Thomas Crowe, \$250; Docomo Inc. counsel David Jeppsen, \$250; Sen. Maria Frica Pangelinan, \$300; Century Insurance president David Sablan, \$250; Virginia-based attorney Orson Swindle III; and businessman Juan S. Tenorio, \$1,450. Tenorio also received contributions from his employees, including: chief of staff Malinda Matson, \$1,152; administrative and finance officer Rose McDermott, \$250; and legislative assistant Roman T. Palacios, \$250.

These candidates are required by law to file updated financial reports in January 2009.

Other candidates who ran election for a non-voting delegate are: Sen. Luis Crisostimo, former senator David Cing, Saipan municipal councilman Felipe Q. Atalig, businessman Chong Man Won, and high school teacher John Davis. Their financial disclosures are not available on the FEC website.

According to the FEC, some individuals and their committees have no obligation to file reports under federal election law, even though their names may appear on state ballots. If an individual raises or spends less than \$5,000, he or she is not subject to reporting under the law.

## SALAS

From Page 1

the Monument, was interviewed by NPR's Bruce Gellerman, host of the environmental show *Living On Earth*, which aired Dec. 5.

The plan to declare the CNMI's three northernmost islands as a marine monument is being considered as part of Bush's "Blue Legacy" project. The area covers 150,000 square miles in the CNMI that will be placed under federal protection.

According to Gellerman, the proposal has some influential supporters—including first lady Laura Bush—and prominent opponents.

Among those trying to sink the President's plan to create this National Marine Monument is Vice President Dick Cheney, and nearly all of the elected officials of Micronesia, Gellerman noted.

"But many residents want to win federal protection, including Andrew Salas," Gellerman said in his opening remarks for the show.

Salas identified the exact location of the area to Gellerman, saying the plan covers the islands of "Maug, Asuncion, and Uracas, and the water surrounding those three islands."

Salas noted that the main reason for his trip to Washington, D.C. is to ask President Bush to further widen the scope of the monument, making it bigger than the 140,000 square miles monument that was established in Hawaii.

When Gellerman asked him how this would help the people of Northern Marianas, he said it would help "re-brand" the CNMI in the eyes of the global community.

"Over the past few years we've be-

come a place where, you know, CNN has reported us as enslaving our guest workers, locking them up in their rooms and abusing 16-year-old waitresses. The reason why we want this thing to be [even] larger is the fact that we can use it, we can re-brand it. We have the Marianas Visitors Authority that will go out and re-brand the Commonwealth as the largest marine protected area in the world. So it would be a retooling of our ability to attract tourists to our Commonwealth," he said.

When asked what federal protection would do for the area, Salas said the three islands are about 300 miles from Saipan and "right now we don't have the means [to protect them]."

"It is protected by the Constitution, but we do not have the means to patrol that area and protect it. As a matter of fact, maybe seven or eight weeks ago, we caught a Taiwanese ship poaching on our waters," he added.

He said that at its most basic level, fundamental protection is at least to keep outsiders away and to stop the poaching of fish.

"Look at what's happening with the fish stocks all over the world. This will provide an area where fish can be protected and when they get big they can lay an abundance of eggs and they can go outside the protected areas and everybody can benefit from it," Salas said.

Reacting to the conflicting stands of the first lady and the vice president, Salas said, "It's not a perfect world, but we try our best."

He said Gov. Benigno Fitial thinks of the plan "as another federal intrusion and it's not."

He said the association he represents has in its possession original copies of over 6,000 signatures from people in the CNMI supporting the monument.

gno Fitial last month, detailing how the money would be spent.

Under the proposal, Power Plant 1 would go from currently producing 8.5 megawatts to producing 41 megawatts—meeting the island demand—by December 2009.

In a recent report, consultants hired by the Public Utilities Commission said, "Given the staggering scope associated with the rehabilitation of existing power plants and the lack of CUC resources, there is almost a 100 percent chance that the Aggreko contract will need to be extended."

CUC paid Aggreko an initial \$1.5 million for the generators. Each month CUC must make a payment of \$504,000 to the company.

## MUÑA

From Page 1

12 months expire, but realistically, like anything else, we need to plan for it if we don't get it done," Muña said of rehabilitating the engines at Power Plant 1. "So we are working with Aggreko and advising them potentially that may be a possibility."

Muña added that the number one priority is to get the engines at Power Plant 1 up and running before September 2009, which he calls a work in progress.

Muña is requesting \$3.89 million from the Office of Insular Affairs for the overhaul of the engines. He submitted an expenditure plan to Gov. Beni-



# Recidivist gets two more convictions

Diego Salas Mundo, reportedly the CNMI’s record holder for having the longest criminal history, added two more criminal convictions to his list.

Mundo, 47, was recently convicted of two counts of theft in two separate cases.

Superior Court Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Mundo to one year in prison, all suspended except for 112 days, for one count of theft.

Manglona sentenced the defendant to one year in prison, all suspended except for 112 days, for another count of theft.

## ‘Fuel surcharge adjustments slow to respond to changes in oil prices’

Adjustments to fuel surcharges are not felt for several months after an increase or decrease in world oil prices, said Kwang Joong Kim, general manager for Asiana Airlines’ Saipan sales office.

Korean Air and Asiana recently announced they are lowering fuel surcharges next month from \$44 to \$18 on flights to China, Southeast Asia and Saipan, in order to reflect the steep decline in jet fuel prices. Surcharges will drop from \$32 to \$9 for flights to Japan. The current surcharge of \$140 to the U.S. and Europe

Following a plea agreement, the judge gave the defendant credit for the time he has already served in jail.

The sentences in both cases, Manglona said, shall run concurrently. This means Mundo must serve a total of 112 days in both cases, minus the days he has already spent in jail. He is expected to be released from the Department of Corrections on Jan. 5, 2009, at 8am.

After completing the prison term, the defendant will be placed on 253 days of probation.

The judge ordered Mundo

will drop to \$41.

Kim said the government controls the fuel surcharges so they must first get approval before the company raises or lowers prices.

There are a few months of interval time between when prices change and when it is reflected in the fuel surcharge, he said.

As fuel prices continue a steep decline, most airlines have cut or eliminated fuel surcharges. This summer oil was trading at more than \$150 per barrel but is now trading at under \$50. *(Kristi Eaton)*

## DUI checkpoint on Friday

The Saipan Department of Public Safety’s Traffic Section will be conducting a DUI/Sobriety checkpoint on Friday, Dec. 12, 2008 on Beach Road, Garapan, by Bank Pacifica from the northbound outer lane, from 7:30pm to 8:45pm.

Checkpoints conducted will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) at the designated

location. This activity is part of the Department of Public Safety’s 3D Program in an effort to deter, detect, and apprehend violators.

All checkpoints are subject to be terminated if it begins to rain. In addition to the checkpoints, officers will be conducting highway criminal interdictions and laser activities. *(DPS)*

to pay restitution to Luis Salas Camacho in cash equivalent to the price of a car battery or a replacement car battery plus another \$1.50 in restitution to Dasom Market.

Manglona required the defendant to pay a \$50 court assessment fee, \$100 in annual probation service fee, and perform 100 hours of community service.

The sentencing came about after Mundo entered a plea agreement. He pleaded guilty to one count of theft each in two cases. The two cases were reportedly his 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> convictions.

Police arrested Mundo in April for reportedly committing the same offenses that got him into trouble in the past—

harassing businesses and their customers.

Police Officer Nicholas C. Leon Guerrero Jr. stated in his report that police officers responded to Dasom Market in Gualo Rai on April 17 at 7:50pm after a report of a disturbance.

Sun Young Kang told police that Mundo had been coming in to her store several times to purchase soju, a Korean liquor. Mundo had been in the store for almost three hours, giving her problems like not leaving her store when told to, asking customers for money, and opening a chocolate cookie package without purchasing the item. Mundo also punched the payphone, damaging it. At the time, he was under the influence of alcohol.

Last September, Mundo was arrested again. This time he stole \$50 cash through deception and a truck’s battery worth \$80 belonging to apartment owner Luis Camacho.

In February 2007, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman imposed a two-year s prison sentence on Mundo, who pleaded guilty to two other cases.

Court papers showed that in July 2006, the Attorney General’s Office charged Mundo with two counts of forgery, and one count of deception.

In August 2006, the AGO charged the defendant with one count of assault and battery, and one count of assault.

The defendant pleaded guilty to forgery and in the second case to assault and battery.

On Aug. 16, 2006, Mundo struck Noris Omengkar with a can of beer.

In December 2006, Wiseman cited that Mundo has had 21 criminal cases filed in the CNMI over the years. The judge said there were 12 separate convictions and numerous instances of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of probation.

In July 2004, the CNMI Supreme Court affirmed the criminal convictions of Mundo, who had harassed tourists, threatened another man and resisted police arrest at a Tinian restaurant.

In December 2004, Mundo was arrested again for domestic violence.

In August 2006, Mundo was arrested for harassing people and hitting a man with a beer can outside the Hong Kong Store in Garapan.

On July 24, 2006, Mundo was arrested for allegedly harassing employees and customers of a barbecue stand. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, The Open Government Act of 1992, the Marianas Public Land Trust have scheduled a Board of Trustees Regular Meeting to be held on **Wednesday, December 10, 2008 beginning at 6:00 PM and Thursday, December 11, 2008 beginning at 6:00 PM on the 1st Floor of the Morgen Building, Suite #107, Saipan, MP.**

The following agenda is hereby established:

I PRELIMINARIES

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes

II CONSULTANT REPORTS

- Legal Counsel Reports\*
- APLE 501
- Investment Consultant Reports
- Flash Reports – November 2008
- Market Update
- Board Consultant Reports
- Financial Statements – September/October 2008
- Loan Administrator Reports

III CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

- FY 2007 Annual Report

IV OLD BUSINESS

- Tinian Public Market Review
- MPLT Resolution 09-01: Home Loan Program
- IPS Review & Amendment - ETI
- By-laws Review & Amendment

V NEW BUSINESS

- IBPC Proposal
- 54th Annual Employee Benefits Conference

VI EXECUTIVE SESSION

At anytime during this scheduled meeting, the Board of Trustees may be required to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential.

VII MISCELLANEOUS

VIII ADJOURNMENT

\* It is anticipated that the following matters will be discussed under Executive Session in its entirety.

In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by the recorded vote of the majority of the trustee governing body. All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items.

/s/ Alvaro A. Santos

Chairman, Board of Trustees

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# Band sets fundraising concert for Ballesteros

The Saipan Pacific Winds, the CNMI's sole community concert band, is busy preparing for a fundraising Christmas concert to benefit the family of murdered security guard Efen Ballesteros.

Lois DeWitt of the Saipan Pacific Winds told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that they are going to hold the concert for a cause on Dec. 22 at 7pm at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret in San Antonio.

"It's free to the community. We

want to invite the community to come and donate for the Ballesteros family," said Lois DeWitt, whose husband, William DeWitt, is the band's conductor.

The band is encouraging businesses and community members to support the concert for a cause.

"The board was very saddened with the death of Ballesteros. They want to dedicate the concert to him and his family," Mrs. Dewitt said.

It will be the Saipan Pacific

Winds' seasonal Christmas program.

Pacific Winds, which is composed of more than 40 members, is a non-profit performing arts organization.

The Saipan Southern High's Manta Ray Band is also joining the concert.

Ballesteros, 45, was found dead at Marianas High School campus in Susupe in the morning of Nov. 18, 2008. He received massive injuries to the face and head caused by

blunt objects. He also suffered a possible fractured skull, police said.

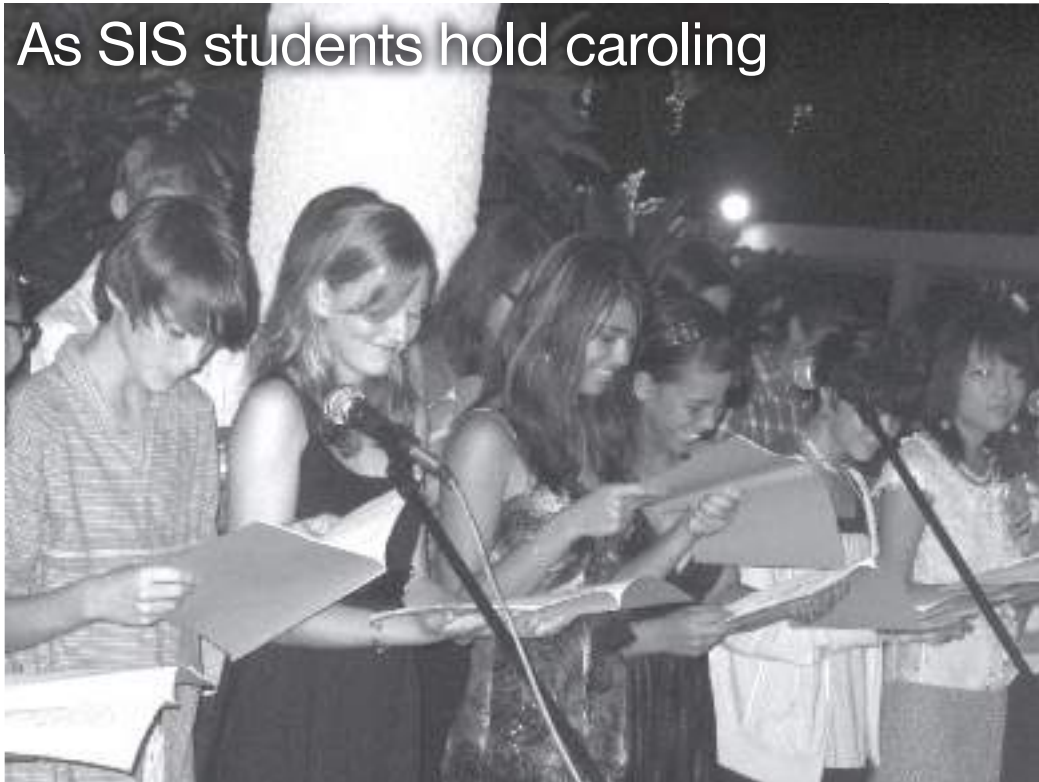
Ballesteros' wallet contain-

ing \$300 cash and a wristwatch were reportedly stolen. He had two minor children, including a five-month old baby, on Saipan.

Three teenagers—Edward Blas, Randy Igisomar, and Eric Rabauliman—are being charged in the case. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

## Hyatt lights up giant Christmas tree

### As SIS students hold caroling



NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Students from Saipan International School sing Christmas carols Friday night after Hyatt Regency lit up its giant Christmas tree to welcome the holidays.

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.  
n\_rodriguez@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan welcomed the Christmas holiday with the lighting of its giant Christmas tree in a well-attended ceremony Friday night.

As in the past, the Christmas tree is located at the hotel lobby's entrance.

Visitors from the community as well as tourists crowded the lobby as 70 students from the Saipan International School held a Christmas caroling. The students' parents and teachers were also present to give their support.

Hyatt General Manager Nick Nishikawa said this year's lighting of the Christmas tree is a more casual event and, for the first time, they invited the community to participate.

"This is our way of saying thank you for the community," Nishikawa said.

He said this is the culmination of the hotel's involvement with community projects like the Make-A-Wish Foundation golf tournament and the cleanup drive and other activities.

Hyatt's message for the holidays, Nishikawa said, will always be about peace.

"Peace means happiness for

the children," he said.

The SIS students, who are from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade, were later treated to dinner at the hotel's open grounds.

Music teacher Celia Jang said they are glad to be invited to the event.

"Thank you so much. The kids really love to perform," Jang said.

The students will also perform at the Saipan Grand Hotel tonight.



### BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Happy birthday Maricar! Wishing you all the best! From your Fiesta friends!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Adopted daughter family's reason to be thankful

By ROB NOVIT  
AIKEN STANDARD SENIOR WRITER

Gordon and Christina Gaskill were enjoying a leisurely Saturday at home with 5-year-old daughter Jackie earlier this month when they heard a familiar tinkling sound outside.

"Ice cream truck!" Gordon shrieked as he swooped a delighted Jackie off her feet and they made a mad dash to the front yard.

They do this every weekend, said Christina with an indulgent smile. Alas, the truck kept on going, and father and daughter returned to the living room laughing despite being empty-handed.

It's just one of those little family moments, but Christina and Gordon cherish such moments and never take them for granted. They celebrated Thanksgiving last week with friends, but they really do give thanks every day for their daughter.

She is the child the Gaskills wanted so badly, the child they traveled halfway around the world to China to adopt. And the gift they received is an amazing little sprite of a kid with more than a touch of Shirley Temple in her. Jackie seems to be intent on racing joyously through life. On that Saturday afternoon, she showed off her already impressive gymnastics skills, taking flying leaps into her parents' arms.

OK, the kid isn't perfect. Occasional meltdowns? Yes, she has them.

"She is a little high maintenance," Christina said cheerfully. "But she's worth every minute of it."

Christina and Gordon went to high school together in Hastings, Mich., and later married in 1994. Gordon originally intended to study creative writing in college. When he did some substitute teaching, he quickly changed his major and graduated with a degree in elementary education from Aquinas College.

He and Christina then sought a change of pace and certainly found it. Gordon signed a two-year contract to teach second grade in Saipan, a 14- by 9-mile island of about 60,000 people and the capital of the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific.

Everyone spoke English, and all the teachers at the school were Americans. Christina got a job with an American law firm. The experience did open their eyes to differ-



The Gaskill couple enjoy a moment with their daughter Jackie.

ent cultures, however, as the populace included people from China, the Philippines, Japan, Thailand and other countries.

"I had to be inventive with teaching strategies and creative in using resources," Gordon said. "We were limited to two photocopies a week."

After two years, they searched the Internet for teaching jobs back in the States. Gordon interviewed with then-principal Dr. Alice Sheehan at Oakwood-Windsor Elementary School in Aiken and knew he had found the right place to teach fourth grade. Christina worked as a paraprofessional there for five years and now works in the school district's Area 1 office.

They wanted to start a family and went through years of infertility treatments. But Christina suffered an early miscarriage, and the couple decided to look into adoption. They considered local sources and also looked at countries like Russia, South America and Korea. Then they attended a meeting of a group in Columbia comprised of parents of children from China.

The paperwork took a very long year. Finally, in the summer of 2004, they flew to Beijing and met and befriended other parents also adopting babies. For three days, the families took a memorable and mandated tour, then flew to Nanchang in Southeastern China.

All the babies in the orphanage were brought by nannies to a conference room, and one by one, the parents went in to meet their daughters. By then, Christina had already picked out Jackie; she was the one who cried and later let out a big scream.

Of course, everyone was crying, and then the Gaskills tearfully picked up Jackie for the first time. They remained in Nanchang for two more weeks, primarily to bond with their daughter and learn more about the culture and Jackie's roots.

Jackie, 10 months old, had been abandoned by her mother and foster mother and now was

losing the nanny, too. Perhaps not surprisingly, she immediately latched on to Gordon and wouldn't let go.

"I took that very hard," Christina admitted. "I've always loved kids and wanted so badly to be a mom. I tried bouncing a ball back and forth, and Jackie loved that, seeing that this lady wasn't so mean. By day four or five, she went to me and it was wonderful."

When they returned home, they found food waiting for them, a gift from their new friends with the Families with Chinese Children organization in Columbia.

From day one, the bubbly, girly-girl personality was clearly evident. Jackie does her gymnastics and dresses up her dolls. Gordon knows more about Barbie than he ever expected. When Christina visits a salon, Jackie tags along and gets her nails done. One day, Jackie told the nail technician that she was from China and was getting a baby sister.

She's not making that up, although the time frame remains uncertain. A year ago, Christina and Gordon began the paperwork to adopt a second daughter from China. But the regulations have changed, and the process could continue indefinitely.

Jackie can entertain herself, bouncing from one thing to another, but she's really a social butterfly and has a new group of friends in Toni Boltin's kindergarten class at Oakwood-Windsor. She comes home and sings a new song she learned that day, Christina said.

Gordon loves having Jackie at school and in the morning, she likes to help him with hallway duty. Her father admits to overprotectiveness and will sometimes peek in Boltin's class—say, three or four days a week.

"I'm like the luckiest guy in the world with this little girl," Gordon said. "When I walk down the hall with her, kids will say, 'It's Jackie's dad.' I'm a very happy daddy."

## EMO warns of dangerous waves

The Emergency Management Office issued a high surf and small craft advisory yesterday, saying that dangerous waves are expected to remain until 6am Thursday.

In a notice, EMO said that north to northeast swells generated by gales in the Northern Pacific have moved into the CNMI and will generate high surf in north and east facing reefs of the Marianas through much of this week.

"Hazardous surf of 10 to 14 feet will continue along north and east facing reefs of the Marianas through at least Tuesday

night. Surf will remain above hazardous level through at least Wednesday night. Any increase in surf could require a high surf warning," EMO said.

It urged people to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, especially those along east and north facing reefs as rip currents are life threatening.

On Saipan, north facing beaches include Achugau Beach; east facing beaches on Saipan includes Tank Beach.

On Tinian, east facing beaches include Long Beach. On Rota, north facing exposures include Teteto Beach. (*EMO*)



# Island Snapshots



**MATH COURT WINNERS**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dandan Elementary School principal Jonas Barcinas, right, poses with the school's students that participated in the PSS Math Court competition. "They brought home so many medals and we are proud of the great, hardworking, and passionate staff for their commitment to helping our kids succeed," said Barcinas.



**EMO PRESENTATION**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Some of Dandan Elementary School's staff and students pose for a picture after participating in an EMO Disaster Preparedness presentation.



**POWER OF PRAYERS**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno Fitial prays with officials from EUCON and the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. A team from TRACS recently conducted a site assessment at EUCON to determine accreditation.



**TAGA RIDERS**

REY BELGADO

Members of Saipan's Taga Riders are presented with a plaque of appreciation by the Office On Aging after the group donated gifts for the *man'amko* Friday last week. The group's president, Bill Camacho, said the gifts were solicited from the business sector. These included assorted items like fruits, t-shirts, coffee cups and other grocery items. The Taga Riders, who have been doing charity work for the past 13 years, also donated \$500 to the senior citizens.



REY BELGADO

**LITTLE MISS JOLLIBEE**

The contestants for the Little Miss Jollibee Saipan pose for a picture during Talent Night on Dec. 7 at the Jollibee outlet in Garapan. The coronation night is going to be held on Dec. 10, Wednesday, at 5pm.



REY BELGADO

The judges during the Talent Night of the Little Miss Jollibee Saipan—Edrelina Beceril, Gigi Hernandez, Carlota Santiago, Luvy Ramos, and former Little Miss Jollibee Ericka Faye Tubera—pose with the staff of Jollibee.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**DONATION**

Members of the Japanese group from the Heiwa O Inoru Chisan Kyokai present students of the Tinian Elementary School with various sports equipment as part of their \$1,000 donation to the school on Nov. 26, 2008. Here, the group's leaders hand over baseball bats, balls, and hula hoops to a student representative.



Members of the Japanese group from the Heiwa O Inoru Chisan Kyokai present croquet equipment to student representatives of the Tinian Elementary School during a turnover ceremony held Nov. 26, 2008.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



# EPA touts accomplishments in 2008

## Hazardous waste cases highlight year in NMI, Guam, A. Samoa

HONOLULU—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2008 enforcement actions in the Pacific were highlighted by hazardous waste related violations in CNMI, Guam and American Samoa.

"EPA enforcement actions in the Pacific Territories will result in clean up of over 171,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and water," said Wayne Nastri, the EPA's administrator for the Pacific Southwest region. "In addition, over \$637,000 will be invested in pollution control and environmental clean-ups."

Nationally, the agency took civil and criminal enforcement actions requiring regulated entities to spend an estimated \$11.8 billion on pollution controls, cleanup and environmental projects, a record for EPA.

The EPA worked with the Guam EPA, CNMI Division of Environmental Quality and the American Samoa EPA to continue the successful compliance and enforcement partnership in the islands.

Below are enforcement highlights for the Pacific Islands:

### COMMONWEALTH OF NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

**Pacific Marine:** After the company was found to have used oil and hazardous waste man-



### ON THE NET

- Full description of the EPA's enforcement cases throughout California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands in 2008: <http://www.epa.gov/region/enforcement/results/08/index.html>
- U.S. EPA OECA Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Accomplishments Report: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/reports/accomplishments/oeca/fy08accomplishment.pdf>
- More information on EPA FY 2008 enforcement and compliance results: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/reports/end-of-year/eoy2008/fy2008.html>

agement violations at its power plant facility in Puerto Rico, Saipan. The company agreed to spend \$68,000 for environmental projects that will focus on used oil management including storage and spill prevention at commercial facilities and also pay a \$20,000 fine

**Concorde Garment:** The company was found to be improperly storing and handling discarded solvent-based paints, spent paint thinners, and solvent-contaminated wastes at its Lower Base facility in Saipan. In addition to a fine of \$15,200 the company will spend up to \$56,000 on an alternative energy project that will provide an additional power source at Southern High School in Saipan. The contractor for the project will be using a wind powered turbine as the energy source to provide electricity to the school. In addition, the project will be used as a catalyst to develop an alternative energy curriculum at

the school, to train students for work opportunities associated with wind power and alternative energy.

**Saipan Airport:** The Commonwealth Port Authority was cited for hazardous waste treatment, handling, storage, and used oil disposal violations at its Saipan International Airport facility. An EPA inspector working along with CNMI Division of Environmental Quality inspectors found the facility had open containers of hazardous waste and stored its hazardous waste and used oil in severely corroded and leaking containers, and was fined \$32,500.

**Japan Water Systems:** The company located in Capitol Hill, Saipan, was found to be selling and distributing an unregistered water disinfectant "Tosoh Cube." The product, imported from Japan and sold to hotels and other businesses in Saipan for private water system disinfection was labeled almost entirely in Japanese, lacked directions for use, precautionary

statements, and other labeling required by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. The company was fined \$26,000.

### GUAM

**JWS Refrigeration Guam:** JWS Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Ltd., a Tamuning, Guam refrigeration and heating equipment services company was found importing banned refrigerants in violation of the Clean Air Act. The company allegedly imported 25,402 kg of hydrochlorofluorocarbon 22, an ozone-depleting substance, from sources outside the United States, a violation of the stratospheric ozone protection regulations. The company was fined was \$53,481

**GWA DW Stipulated Penalties:** Stipulated penalties totaling \$48,000 were assessed to the Guam Waterworks Authority for failing to fully comply with a 2003 court order to make improvements to its drinking water system. GWA was fined \$30,000 for failing to meet a November 2007 deadline for completing installation of new drinking water meters for its customers. The utility was also fined \$9,000 for not meeting an early January deadline to complete a full renovation of the Ugum drinking water treatment plant. GWA was also fined \$9,000 for failing to meet a June 30 deadline to design and install new drinking water supply lines as part of the Sinajana Water Transmission Line project.

**University of Guam:** The University of Guam was found to have hazardous waste and other waste management violations at its facility located at University of Guam Station in Mangilao, Guam. Like many school campuses, the university's facility generates and stores hazardous waste such as waste varnish and flammable paint waste. The facility also generates and stores used oil and other wastes including spent lead acid batteries and fluorescent lamps. The University was fined \$10,000.

### AMERICAN SAMOA

**MYD Samoa:** The company was issued an administrative order to take corrective actions at its Satala shipyard to control and limit the discharges of pollutants into Pago Pago harbor. The order requires MYD Samoa to capture and control all discharges of process wastewaters, wastes, spent sandblasting grit, paint chips, paint overspray, and storm water drainages to the harbor from the dry docks. Steps need to be taken to minimize rainwater contact with all sources of contamination, and capture of contaminated wastewaters for alternative disposal. The shipyard will need to upgrade treatment, install additional controls, and may have to develop an alternative to harbor discharge.

## Flashback

### A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

#### December 9, 1998

#### With little time left, crisis panel off track

With barely a day before it expires, a special Senate committee tasked to deal with CNMI's economic crisis has yet to draw up a list of recommendations and possible solutions that may help the government address growing fears on the worsening condition. But a co-chair of the joint panel yesterday brushed aside perceived failure to plan a strategy at this time, saying that other government bodies set up in recent months are tackling the same problems that have plagued the island economy since late last year. Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes also said they are still gathering information from various groups which can assist them to come up with a comprehensive report for consideration by the legislature.

#### Privatized trash disposal operations planned

The CNMI Task Force on Solid Waste is planning to privatize part of the operation of the future Marpi depression landfill facility in order to stir employment opportunities for the community, according to Lt. Gov. Jesus R. Sablan. Sablan, who heads the task force, said he will propose to the committee the privatization of trash collection and transportation of garbage from pick-up station up to the landfill to help create employment at a time when jobs are getting scarce because of the economic slump. Construction of the Marpi landfill is to begin either January or February next year, Sablan said, and will be operational by the end of 1999, paving the way for the closure of the 20-hectare Puerto Rico dump site - one of the campaign promises of Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio.

#### December 9, 1999

#### 30 percent retirement bonus may have to go

Government employees stand to lose the 30 percent bonus under an early retirement program by next week if Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio finally signs into law a bill that the Senate passed in a recent session after holding off action for nearly a year. Proponents of the legislation said elimination of such retirement benefit will comply with the ongoing austerity measures and stave off potential drain of the NMI Retirement Fund's resources. But senators, in voting 6-0 in favor of House Bill 11-359 during Tuesday's session, wanted assurances that current eligible recipients will not be denied the bonus once it becomes a law.

#### Enron warns against downsizing of power project

A plan to issue a new request for proposal for the controversial Saipan power plant will be a "complete mistake and a disaster," according to one of the top bidders for the long delayed project. An Enron official also warned it will be more expensive if the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation decides to scrap the 80-megawatt plant and begin a new round of procurement for a power project with a lower capacity. Frederick E. Lacroix, general manager of Enron Guam Piti Corp., said prices offered by current bidders will jump to reflect the rising inflation, higher interest rates and currency fluctuation that have occurred in the past few months.

#### December 9, 2002

#### Pongsona nears supertyphoon status

Typhoon Pongsona mustered more strength yesterday, packing winds of up to 140mph as it prepared to make landfall on the Northern Marianas region, with its closest approach on Rota starting last night. The typhoon also dumped drenching rains across the region yesterday, with National Weather forecasts warning residents to prepare for 12 to 20 inches of rain that could possibly lead to flash floods and landslides. By yesterday afternoon, the weather disturbance has already prompted some 323 residents to troop to designate evacuation centers to take shelter and protection.

#### NMC's Moir resigns, 2 others terminated

Northern Marianas College president Kenneth Wright has accepted Friday the resignation of executive vice president Barbara Moir and terminated two others related to her. In an interview, Wright confirmed that three individuals-Moir, her sister Melody Actouka, and Moir's assistant, Robert Hegwood-will be leaving the college but not until after 90 days or on March 1, 2003. Wright introduced a new organizational chart, appointing new people to new posts, including former president Jack Sablan, whom he promoted as the interim dean for Academic Programs and Services.



### TREE DECORATION CONTEST

Students and teachers help put up decorations on this tree at the opening day of the annual Christmas Tree decoration contest at the Paseo de Marianas, kicking off the monthlong holiday activity at the Garapan Area.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

## Samoa considers bailout for biggest industry

**APIA, Samoa** (Samoa Observer/PIR)—An agreement has been reached on the rescue package for financially-strapped Yazaki Eds Samoa, Acting Prime Minister, Misa Telefoni told the Samoa Observer yesterday.

"It will be released to the public when Cabinet confirms it," Misa said.

The agreement was reached on Thursday, Nov. 27, he said.

The Acting Prime Minister revealed that Cabinet has been discussing the rescue package for a while and had appointed a committee to consider it.

This committee was chaired

by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Inland Revenue, Silafau Paul Meredith.

"We have been addressing these issues since before the current global crisis impacted on Yazaki's only client—Toyota Australia," Misa said. "The continuing raising of this matter is having a severe adverse impact on staff morale," he said, "and this is why I do not want to make an official statement until Cabinet has made the appropriate decision. My main concern is staff morale."

It is likely Cabinet will make a decision on the rescue package for Yazaki when Prime Minister

Tuilaepa Lufesi'ai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi returns from overseas.

Yesterday, Silafau, who knows the details of the rescue package, said his committee's report on the matter has not been discussed by Cabinet yet.

Yazaki has reportedly asked for \$10 million [US\$3.4 million] worth of assistance from Government to stay afloat.

It is experiencing slumping orders for the wire harnesses it assembles at its Vaitele plant for motor vehicle manufacturers.

Eighty workers not directly involved in factory floor work have been made redundant.



# Hofschneider, Cruz get top marks in Tinian Star tilt

Chloe Hofschneider, a freshman at Tinian High School, gave a powerful rendition of the Beyonce hit *Listen* to emerge as the Tinian Star 2008, besting four other contestants during the competition held Saturday night at the lobby of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino.

Organized by the United Filipino Association in Tinian, or Unifil, the contest also saw 8-year-old Mariah Cruz romping off with the Tinian Little Star 2008 award with her energetic take on the Hillary Duff anthem *What Dreams Are Made Of*.

Chloe, who just turned 14 years old, was giggly during the interview, seemingly unable to believe that she had won the singing contest, but she showed none of that while on stage, delivering a poised and confident performance that got her the nod of the judges that included former senator David Cing.

"I'm really happy [about winning the contest]. I'm actually surprised that I made it this far," she said.

Chloe, who counts Mandy Moore, Whitney Houston, Sarah Geronimo and Beyonce as her idols, credited the support of her parents, Julian and Margaret, for her win, and said her winning piece is actually one of her favorite songs.

Chloe's talent evidently does not come from nowhere as her dad, Julian, is a well-known musician and composer. Chloe herself, the eldest of four, said that she has been singing as far back as she could remember.

The same holds true for Mariah, the winner of the Tinian Little Star 2008, who said she loves to sing a capella. Although this was her first time joining the contest, she said her win will only motivate her to continue singing and joining more competitions. "It was fun and I am so happy I won," she said.

This Tinian Elementary School student counts among her idols her namesake, Mariah Carey, as well as Duff and Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas.

The other winners in the Little Star competition were Ritalind King, first runner-up; and Kalea Nabors, second runner-up, while the other winners in the Tinian Star 2008 division were Alonica Anore, first runner-up; Jonathan San Nicolas, second runner-up; Jonie Polistico, third runner-up; and Danilo Gilber, fourth runner-up.

The finalists were chosen after four elimination rounds. Judging was based on scores garnered by the contestants during their respective performances, together with votes cast by audience members.

The event, which saw hundreds of people jam-packed into the cavernous lobby of the Tinian Dynasty, also featured dance performances by members of the MyWAVE Club of Tinian Elementary School and the TDHC Dancers. *(Saipan Tribune)*



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

The winners in the Tinian Star 2008 competition are, from left, Chloe Hofschneider, champion; Alonica Anore, first runner-up; Jonathan San Nicolas, second runner-up; Jonie Polistico, third runner-up; and Danilo Gilber, fourth runner-up.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

The runners-up in the Tinian Star 2008 and Tinian Little Star 2008 are presented certificates of appreciation.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

The members of the United Filipino Association in Tinian pose after the event.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

A dance performance by members of the MyWAVE Club of Tinian Elementary School.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

The winners in the Little Star 2008 competition are, from left, Mariah Cruz, champion, Ritalind King, first runner-up; and Kalea Nabors, second runner-up.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

Unifil president Conrad Libut, right, presents a \$500 donation to the Tinian man'amko.



Chloe Hofschneider delivers a poised and confident performance during the contest.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA



Eight-year-old Mariah Cruz sings an a capella version of *What Dreams Are Made Of*.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

Chloe Hofschneider poses with her parents, Julian and Margarita, and her siblings Jeremiah, Zachariah, and Joshua at the lobby of the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino after her winning performance.



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## Putin tries to bluff Obama

Vladimir Putin's unsubtle campaign to intimidate President-elect Barack Obama continues apace. In a broadcast appearance Thursday, the Russian prime minister claimed to have detected some "positive signals" from the incoming administration. For example, "we hear from people close to the president-elect" that "there should be no rush" toward NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, because "one should not spoil relations with Russia." Also, "we already hear that (Obama) should re-think the expediency of deploying" missile defense systems.

In other words, what Putin claims to understand is that the new U.S. government will surrender on the two pressure points Moscow has been using in its attempt to reestablish itself as an imperial power in Europe and a counterweight to the United States. He suggests that Obama will give up the U.S. policy of supporting eventual NATO membership for the two countries on Russia's borders that are seeking to establish themselves as liberal democracies and abandon the Bush administration's compacts with the Polish and Czech governments to install missile interceptors and a radar system aimed at Iran.

We don't believe that Obama has any intention of caving in to such bluster. But Putin's rhetoric underlines two early and difficult issues the administration will have to manage, not only with Russia but with European allies who will try to tug the new president in different directions.

At its final NATO ministerial meeting, the Bush administration barely managed to finesse the issue of Georgia and Ukraine. Though NATO resolved at a summit this year that the two countries will eventually become members, Germany and Italy now lead a group of countries that, following Russia's invasion of Georgia in August, want to stop any steps toward that goal. Former Warsaw Pact countries such as Poland and Lithuania, by contrast, argue that only firm NATO support for Ukraine and Georgia — and a more tangible presence in their own countries — will deter further Russian aggression.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice finally agreed to a compromise in which Georgia and Ukraine will begin programs to prepare for NATO but will not, for now, be awarded the "membership action plan" that previous candidates have used. NATO also renewed its endorsement of a European-based missile defense. That essentially leaves both initiatives in a gray zone; the Obama administration will have to decide whether to use the ambiguous NATO mandate to provide vigorous support for Ukraine and Georgia, and whether to press ahead with the missile defense deals struck by the Bush administration.

Legitimate questions exist about whether the outgoing administration has unreasonably rushed the missile system and about the reliability of the current governments of Georgia and Ukraine. But Putin's words are a reminder of another reality: Any retreat by the new administration on these issues will be taken by the Kremlin as a victory for its neo-imperialist project and as a sign of Obama's weakness. The "signals" Putin receives from the new president need not be provocative or antagonistic, but when it comes to defending the independence of Russia's democratic neighbors, Obama's message must be firm.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post



### Letter to the Editor

## A call to convene a CNMI economic summit

Gov. Benigno Fitial's administration will begin its fourth year of stewardship next month. For three years now, it has attempted to turn around the ailing economy of the CNMI, but with little success. Whether it could do so in 2009 is quite doubtful, for several reasons. First, for a year now, the U.S. economy itself and most of the major world economies have been in a global recession. Second, there has been no significant economic event taking place in the CNMI during the past three years that would indicate that the poor state of our economy would soon turn around. Having said this, it does not mean that the CNMI should simply give up and do nothing anymore about fixing our economy.

There is no question that 2008 appear to have been the worst year for the CNMI economy since 1998. The continuing decline in tax and other revenues realized by the CNMI government during the past 10 years attests to this fact. The budget of \$156.7 million for FY 2009 that the Legislature just passed reflects a decline of over 35 percent from the revenue collected by the CNMI government a decade ago. The continuing decline in government revenue, as everybody knows, has greatly compromised the delivery of essential public service to the people of the CNMI.

Aggravating our dire economic condition, we learn from Finance Secretary Eloy Inos the other day that the CNMI government incurred a substantial deficit of \$18 million for the fiscal year just ended. This news, amidst the series of austerity measures taken over the past three years, does not bode well for the economic future of the CNMI. Unless the local economy begins to turn around, the CNMI would soon find itself unable to function effectively as a self-governing entity.

The insular economy of the CNMI, which has been in recession for at least five years now, continues to remain gloomy. Primarily because of the poor state of the economy, many of our residents have left for other places to earn a living. The CNMI economic situation is such that there appear to be no light at the end of the tunnel. We know, though, that there is light at the end of the tunnel. We simply have to work hard to reach that light. In order to turn around our literally stagnant economy, we have to sit down and determine what needs to be done to turn it around. This requires realistic and sound planning. It requires making tough, difficult and, many times, unpleasant decisions. It requires plenty of hard work and sacrifice by all of us. And it requires that we set aside our differences, so that we could begin working together. But we have to do it, if we are to improve our lot.

Success, as we all know, comes only through hard work and perseverance. In order to turn around the poor economic state we are in, however, we need to start somewhere. So far, we have not really made any concerted and realistic effort to turn around the

CNMI economy. And just exactly what do I mean by this? Well, we have never really "grabbed the bull by the horn" and come up with a specific set of proposed actions that must be taken to improve the economy.

Our leaders, like many of the early-morning bloggers whose comments you read on the papers daily, are mostly reactionaries. Like the morning bloggers who instantaneously react to almost any news story that is printed, many of our elected and appointed leaders approach issues affecting the CNMI mostly by reacting. This is not good, of course, because it shows that they are not in control of the situation. If our leaders are going to start making positive changes to the economy of the CNMI, for example, they should start by first formulating and adopting a clear "plan of action" to improve the economy. Our leaders must work together in the formulation of an "economic master plan" for the CNMI, both short-term and long-term. Then they must follow it up with real action and hard work.

Why is this so difficult to do? The reason why is because many of our political leaders (elected and appointed) in the CNMI are usually looking out only for themselves. This is really the major setback that many of us have: the attitude that "if not me, then it's them who will benefit." These constant fighting, bickering and gamesmanship have been going on for far too long in the CNMI government. And it has to stop first before we could begin making any real and lasting improvements. The really sad thing about this unhealthy attitude of many of our leaders is that our young adults are quickly learning to do the same thing. Our leaders know very well that they are elected to serve the people and not their own personal interest; yet they persist in "business as usual." If our selfish attitude is not corrected soon, our government and our economy will continue to be dysfunctional. We will continue having great difficulty improving our situation.

In order to stop once and for all the constant bickering and gamesmanship that have been going on, our leaders have to develop a new and positive attitude. They should lead (not react) by working for the benefit of the people they are serving. Our elected leaders, as well as those appointed to public office, have to work cooperatively for the benefit of everyone. They must also learn how to compromise. And for the sake of the Commonwealth, they have to formulate and adopt a clear and realistic set of goals and objectives that the CNMI should be working to achieve.

We cannot continue fighting with one another, because nothing will ever get accomplished. As elected officials, our leaders are charged with guiding the future course and direction of the Commonwealth. They are also charged with improving the welfare and

See A CALL on Next Page



**EDITORIAL POLICY**

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

**Letters to the Editor****The march remembered**

It was great to see everyone gathered for the anniversary of the memorable Unity March. There are six events that stand out in NMI history: Magellan's stop here, Operation Forager, the *Enola Gay* leaving with Fat Man, President Ford's signing the Covenant, the Unity March, and President Bush signing S.2739 into law. I would like to congratulate everyone who participated in the Unity March, as your support helped accomplish federalization of NMI labor and immigration.

The new law requires that the status of guest workers be addressed within two years and everyone here knows that. The economics facing guest workers in the interim period leaves many in worse position than last year, and most living with uncertainty. "Federalization: you asked for it, you got it" is someone's sarcastic quote, but federalization hasn't started yet. Economics is quite complicated but ours is elementary now. The textile industry has closed and thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in local revenues are lost. Employment opportunities for locals and guest workers have vanished, the NMI can't pay thousands of government salaries without textile revenues, and Saipan's population will drop, perhaps in half, and is already dropping rapidly. Some Unity March organizers are no longer among us. Our tiny island can't support thousands of guest workers like it once did. Our economy can't survive with residents remitting salaries abroad either.

Improving the legal working status that allows guest workers to change employers and the freedom to relocate for employment is vital to our economy, now more than ever. This has been the only solution from the onset of this movement. If the U.S. does this, numerous workers will vacate the starving NMI for prospects in the U.S., the remaining jobs here will be de facto protected for indigenous residents. This may retain some of our local youth, which are presently leaving en masse. Improving the status of guest workers is the only appropriate solution for all residents of the NMI.

The U.S. preliminary regulations will enforce S.2739 with modest input from our residents. The U.S. apparently heard indigenous islanders' concern with losing identity and culture on an island with increasing Chinese influence. We can rest assured that losing a visa waiver program with China and Russia will wipe any influence of those nations away. That loss may also bankrupt our struggling hotels and other businesses related to the increasingly competitive tourism industry. Mired in such doubt, we can be certain of one thing, that a lack of unity here is hurting us all.

There is no such thing as status quo; the world keeps moving whether or not we do. Federalization never promised us anything but an unyielding hope for a level playing field and respite from a broken system plagued with corruption, ineptitude, nepotism, and injustice. I have, and I encourage you, to write U.S. congresspersons with our unyielding hope that the United States, including the departments of Homeland Security and Interior will draw the same conclusions and put final resolution to this matter.

**Ron Hodges**  
via e-mail

**A CALL**

From Page 10

well-being of the people of the Commonwealth. Those are the primary reasons why they were elected to public office—to lead and to govern wisely. But sadly, as we all know, this has not been the case most of the time.

We know, though, that it is never too late to start. And we also know that we have to start somewhere or we will continue to be in the same unfortunate predicament that we have been in. A "call to action" must, therefore, be made *immediately* by our executive and legislative leaders. We clearly have no more time to waste. We need to set aside our differences and meet soon to formulate a plan of action that would address the economic situation of the CNMI. We have to come up with solutions to our economic problems. Once we have established a set of goals and objectives, we would then need to begin actively implementing such plans and begin doing the hard work needed to improve the economy.

Could this "CNMI economic summit" be organized soon and be sponsored jointly by the executive and legislative branches? Could it be scheduled for sometime in February or March of 2009? Such economic working conference should, of course, include our busi-

**Wanted: A unified workable plan for CUC**

In my recent trip to Washington, D.C., Delegate-elect Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan and I met with Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs Director Nick Pula and his staff. I am happy to report that Mr. Pula and the Office of Insular Affairs are willing to help the CNMI solve its power crisis. Federal funds may be reprogrammed and authorized to solve the power crisis. The only thing required from the CNMI is for the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Governor to come up with a plan. What is needed is a unified workable plan to provide affordable and reliable power to the people of the CNMI.

There are three parts to the power problem. First is the price of fuel. There are some things that can be done to reduce reliance on expensive fossil fuel, especially with alternative energy, but presently for the most part we are at the mercy of the global market. Second is the management and personnel of CUC. Though performance-based management and accountability can reduce waste and mismanagement, ultimately people are still needed to run CUC. Third is the sad state of the engines at the power plant. Should we buy new engines? Should we repair some engines? What is the plan?

**Government transparency by Internet**

Two of the future-oriented CNMI legislators, Tina Sablan and Joseph N. Camacho, originated an innovative means of guaranteeing government transparency via the Internet. It is a step into the 21st century. All teachers of civics should peruse this website frequently and elicit responses from your students. If your students have internet capability give them assignments from this site. For you newspaper readers, I'll re-announce this website [www.camachocnmi.com](http://www.camachocnmi.com). At this site, you can view the current legislation under consideration by our esteemed congress people and you can comment on it! No longer can you say "I didn't know what they were doing." What they're doing is in plain English on this website. If you don't visit here periodically, you have no one to blame, but yourself. Reminds me of an old folk song titled *This land is your land, this land is my land*. Use this website also for information to help you decide for whom you will cast your ballot next November. You can see which lawmaker is doing productive work and which are not. That's [www.camachocnmi.com](http://www.camachocnmi.com).

The big news is this. I just discovered that President-elect Barack H. Obama is taking the United States of America into the 21st cen-

**No to proposed As Matuis resort**

The Tatao Tano CNMI Inc. is in complete opposition to the proposed land lease by Flame Sako Resort Hotel and Spa in As Matuis for a resort plan. The 10.9 hectares of property located immediately north of Palms Resort is a huge public land being sought for such a resort.

The concern that we have with this proposal is the inclusion of a popular, developed beachfront called PauPau Beach Park, which is not being mentioned by anyone. We are at this point disappointed with this issue for it is an injustice to our community and especially to our people utilizing the said area on a daily basis. Our government, the Legislative Branch and the Department of Public Lands need to show some respect for the general public being who have

The Aggreko generators are temporary generators. In six months, the contract will expire unless extended for another few months. But the real problem is finding the funding to repair or replace the engines at the power plant. The federal government is willing to help the CNMI fund these repairs or replacement; we just have to have a unified workable plan.

In fairness, there are people at the legislature, at the Administration and CUC who are working very hard to keep the power on. What is needed is to focus our collective energy into coming up with a unified workable plan. The federal government is willing to provide the funding to repair or replace the engines so that the people of the CNMI can have reliable and affordable power, if the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Governor can come up with a unified workable plan. What that plan is will take form if and only if the Governor and the legislators sit down in the same room and hammer out a unified workable plan.

**Joseph Norita Camacho**  
Floor Leader, House of Representatives

tury in a similar manner. A website entitled <http://change.gov> has been established on the web. This site is to inform and ask for comments on major policy questions facing the American people. I only briefly browsed it on Sunday morning, so am not quite sure exactly how it works. Obviously, it's brand new. The website also reveals our President's plans for the country. It's interesting reading. Could this website be used to address issues between the CNMI and the U.S.? Could it be a means to decrease the very expensive junkets to the U.S.? Why not?

My main reason for bringing this to the attention of the folks here in the CNMI is to encourage our educators, especially those teaching social studies subjects, to get your students involved in the day-to-day operation of government, both ours and the national government. President-elect Obama says he intends to move our schools into the 21st century now. Let's beat him to the punch. Check out <http://change.gov>.

**Roger N. Ludwick**  
Sadog Tasi, Saipan

strived hard for many years in the development, protection and upkeep of the beach park.

We will be attending and following this issue closely to ensure that our community is not chased out of their public beach. Our community must realize the freedom one has in the use of PauPau Beach vs. a proposed hotel resort. Currently it's free to use but with a resort in place one would have to pay a fee just to swim in their swimming pool, to include non-access to the beachside

**Gregorio Cruz Jr.**  
President, Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

among other things, address the kind of industries that appear suitable for the CNMI. This economic agenda should also identify what are the key legal impediments that must be removed in order to facilitate foreign investment in the CNMI. Such an agenda must also address the state of our public education and the need for CNMI residents not going to college to acquire a skill so that they could be gainfully employed by the private sector. It should also address how the CNMI government should reduce its bloated employment bureaucracy. It should address the need to improve and strengthen our visitor industry and make it competitive with other destinations in our region. And so forth.

If the people of the CNMI are in agreement with what this letter is proposing, i.e., to have a CNMI economic summit early next year, then it is strongly urged that they make their feelings known in writing to the media and to our leaders (government, business and civic). It is high time we do something concrete and realistic to improve matters in the CNMI. Such summit should serve as a referendum on what future direction the CNMI should take hereafter. We really have no choice but to begin somewhere; and the time to do that is now.






**Jose S. Dela Cruz**  
Navy Hill, Saipan



Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

# The Weather

## 5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

### Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲84 ▼76
Palau	Showers	▲87 ▼78
Yap	Sunny	▲90 ▼77
Chuuk	Sunny	▲90 ▼79
Pohnpei	Mostly Sunny	▲86 ▼73
Kosrae	Sunny	▲89 ▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲84 ▼76

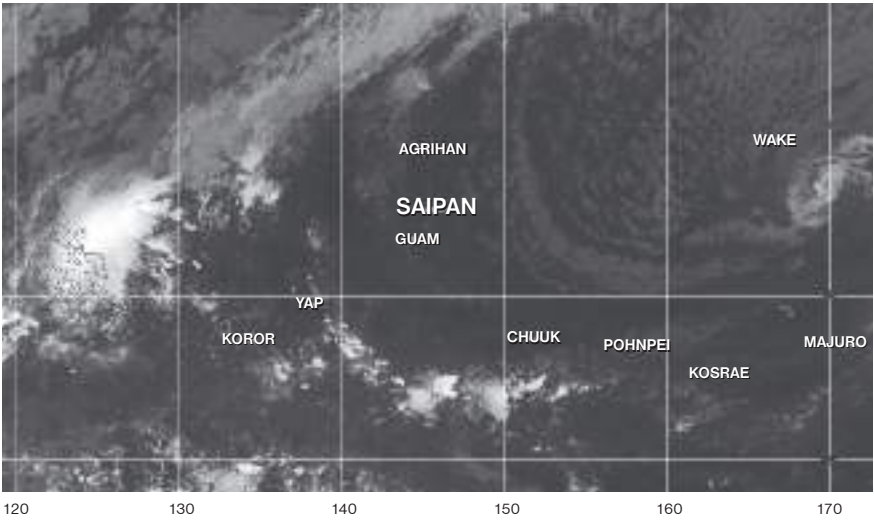
### Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲73 ▼61
Beijing	Cloudy	▲43 ▼25
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲71 ▼57
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲80 ▼68
London	Showers	▲39 ▼32
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲76 ▼53
Manila	Rain	▲84 ▼74
Melbourne	Showers	▲68 ▼51
Miami	Cloudy	▲81 ▼70
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲49 ▼42
Osaka	Rain	▲44 ▼44
Paris	Rain	▲37 ▼33
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲58 ▼41
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	▲51 ▼43
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲46 ▼33
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62 ▼44
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	▲48 ▼32
Tokyo	Showers	▲57 ▼50
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲49 ▼49

### Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:00AM Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
10:02AM Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
3:57PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
11:17PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

### Yesterday's Satellite Image



#### PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, DEC. 8, 2008

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends from 25N146E southwestward beyond 130E at 14N. A few thunderstorms are within an area from 17N130E to 18N135E to 14N130E back to 17N130E otherwise clouds and patchy rain are along and up to 350 miles northwest of the shear line. Scattered showers are west of Palau within 75 miles of a line from 3N132E to 14N132E and south of Yap within 75 miles of a line from 7N138E to 3N143E. Low-level convergence is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms just south of Chuuk within 100 miles of a line from 4N149E to 6N152E. A surface low is centered near 19N172E. A nearly stationary front extends northeastward from the low past 22N180. An occluded front extends southeastward from the low to 19N178E then southwestward as a cold front to 9N170E where it becomes a shear line extending across Majuro to 2N165E then northwestward to end between Pohnpei and Chuuk at 7N156E. Isolated thunderstorms are within 100 miles of a line from 12N176E to 18N180 otherwise scattered showers are within 75 miles of both the cold front and shear line. Extensive cloudiness is north of the low past 25N and northeast of the low along and up to 250 miles either side of the stationary front. Trade-wind convergence is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over the eastern Marshall Islands within 100 miles of a line from 5N175E to 7N178E.

### Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:32AM	5:47 PM
Wednesday	6:32AM	5:47 PM
Thursday	6:33AM	5:48 PM
Friday	6:33AM	5:48 PM
Saturday	6:34AM	5:48 PM

### Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:26PM	2:32 AM
Wednesday	3:15PM	3:31 AM
Thursday	4:11PM	4:36 AM
Friday	5:14PM	5:44 AM
Saturday	6:22PM	6:52 AM

## GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS  
Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS  
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS  
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI  
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE  
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

#### CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

#### REQUIREMENTS

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

##### For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
<b>Saipan-Rota</b> CO9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7	<b>Rota-Saipan</b> CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6
<b>Saipan-Guam</b> CO9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily CO9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily CO9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota CO9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6 CO9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily CO9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily CO9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily	<b>Guam-Saipan</b> CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7 CO9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota CO9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily CO9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily CO9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily CO9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily CO9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily
<b>Saipan-Narita</b> NW 099 5:00am 7:40am Daily NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily	<b>Narita-Saipan</b> NW 076 10:15am 2:40pm Daily NW 077 6:25pm 1:25am+1 2,3,4,5,6,7 NW 100 8:45pm 1:15am+1 Daily
<b>Saipan-Osaka</b> NW 083 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	<b>Osaka-Saipan</b> NW 084 10:40am 3:10pm Daily
<b>Saipan-Nagoya</b> NW 078 8:25am 11:05am Daily	<b>Nagoya-Saipan</b> NW 077 9:00pm 1:25am+1 Daily
<b>Saipan-Incheon</b> OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7 OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily	<b>Incheon-Saipan</b> OZ 605 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ 603 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ 603 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1,2,3,4,5,6
<b>Saipan-Busan</b> OZ 608 3:50am 7:20am 1,4,5,7	<b>Busan-Saipan</b> OZ 607 9:30pm 2:40am+1 3,4,6,7
<b>Saipan-Shanghai</b> FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6	<b>Shanghai-Saipan</b> FM 843 7:15pm 1:50am+1 1,5
<b>Rota-Guam</b> CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7	<b>Guam-Rota</b> CO 9598 2:30am 3:00am 5,6
<b>Guam-Manila</b> CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror CO 933 8:00pm 9:40pm Daily PR 111 6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7	<b>Manila-Guam</b> CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily PR 110 10:10pm 4:00am+1 1,3,5,6,7
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

## FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
<b>Guam-Rota</b>				FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 100 7:00am 7:30am Daily				FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
<b>Rota-Saipan</b>				FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 100 7:50am 8:20am Daily				FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
<b>Saipan-Rota</b>				FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:00am 9:30am Daily				FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
<b>Rota-Guam</b>				FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 200 9:50am 10:15am Daily				<b>Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**</b>			
<b>Guam-Rota</b>				FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 300 4:00pm 4:30pm Daily				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
<b>Rota-Saipan</b>				FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 300 4:50pm 5:25pm Daily				FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
<b>Saipan-Rota</b>				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 400 6:00pm 6:30pm Daily				FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
<b>Rota-Guam</b>				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 400 6:45pm 7:15pm Daily				FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
<b>Saipan-Tinian</b>				FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 101 6:45am 6:55am Daily				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 103 7:30am 7:40am Daily				FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 105 8:00am 8:10am Daily				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 107 8:40am 8:50am Daily				FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily
FRE 109* 9:10am 9:20am Daily							
FRE 111* 10:45am 10:55am Daily							



## NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.com](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.com)



# Business

## Obama: Economy to get worse before it improves

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—President-elect Barack Obama said Sunday the economy will get worse before it gets better, pledged a recovery plan “equal to the task” and warned lawmakers that the days of pork barrel spending are over.

Less than six weeks before his inauguration, Obama declined to say how large an economic stimulus plan he envisions. He said his blueprint for recovery will include help for homeowners facing foreclosure on their mortgages if President George W. Bush has not acted by Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

“We’ve got to provide a blood infusion to the patient right now to make sure that the patient is stabilized. And that means that we can’t worry short term about the deficit. We’ve got to make sure that the economic stimulus plan is large enough to get the economy moving,” he said.

Obama made his comments

on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” in his most extensive interview since winning the White House more than a month ago, and later at a news conference in Chicago. The president-elect said it is important that domestic carmakers survive the current crisis, although he accused the industry’s executives of taking a “head in the sand approach” that has prevented their companies from becoming more competitive.

“Congress is doing the exact right thing by asking for a conditions-based assistance package that holds the industry’s feet to the fire and gives the industry some short-term assistance,” he said.

In addition to the policy issues, Obama avoided a direct answer when asked whether he has quit cigarettes as he prepares to move into a no-smoking White House. “I have done a terrific job, under the circumstances, of

making myself much healthier. And I think that you will not see any violations of these rules in the White House,” he said.

Obama called the news conference to introduce retired

Gen. Eric Shinseki as his choice to head the Veterans Affairs Department. Shinseki, who was a four-star general, was forced into retirement five years ago by the Bush admin-

istration after saying the president’s plans to invade Iraq required more troops.

Shinseki pledged to build a “smooth, error-free, no-fail benefits-assured transition” back to

civilian life for veterans.

Twice in the opening moments of the NBC interview, the president-elect said the economic situation “is going to get worse before it gets better,” an unspoken plea with voters to have patience as the incoming administration tries to grapple with the issue.

He announced plans Saturday for the largest public works spending program since the creation of the interstate highway system a half-century ago, although he said aides are still debating among themselves how much it should cost.

“What we need to do is examine, what are the projects where we’re going to get the most bang for the buck? How are we going to make sure taxpayers are protected? You know, the days of just pork coming out of Congress as a strategy, those days are over,” he said. Some lawmakers have mentioned an economic aid plan in the range of \$500 billion or higher, and Democratic leaders say they hope to have legislation ready soon after Jan. 20.



President-elect Barack Obama listens to a reporter’s question during a news conference in Chicago, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008. AP

### BUSINESS BRIEFS

#### Reports: Tribune Co. weighing bankruptcy filing

**CHICAGO (AP)**—Tribune Co., owner of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, other newspapers and the Chicago Cubs and Wrigley Field, has hired financial advisers ahead of a possible filing for bankruptcy-court protection, according to reports on Sunday. The Chicago Tribune reported its parent hired investment bank Lazard Ltd. and law firm Sidley Austin as it considers its financial options. “It’s an uncertain and difficult environment,” Tribune Co. spokesman Gary Weitman said in a Chicago Tribune story published on the newspaper’s Web site Sunday night. “We haven’t made any decision. We’re looking at all of our options.” Weitman did not immediately respond to requests from The Associated Press for comment. Lazard spokeswoman Judi Mackey said the firm declined to comment on the reports. The Wall Street Journal, quoting people familiar with the matter, said a bankruptcy filing could come as early as this week. It said Tribune Co.’s cash flow may not be enough to cover nearly \$1 billion in interest payments that are due this year.

#### Chicago workers’ sit-in becomes rallying point

**CHICAGO (AP)**—A sit-in by laid-off workers at a shuttered window factory in Chicago is becoming a cause celebre for those who want action to avert economic pain. Politicians, community leaders and members of outside unions turned up Sunday at the Republic Windows and Doors company to support the 250 or so former workers occupying the plant. Workers say they’ll stay put until they’re given severance and vacation pay. Factory worker Melvin Maclin says the protesters expected to face arrest when they began the sit-in Friday. But he says spirits are high after all the backing they’ve received.

Supporters fill the lobby of the building, and workers take turns occupying the plant floor. The Rev. Jesse Jackson met with the protesters Sunday.

#### Price of gas hits lowest point in nearly 5 years

**CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP)**—The average price of U.S. gasoline fell 22 cents a gallon during the past two weeks, bringing it to its lowest level in nearly five years, according to a national survey released Sunday. The average price of regular gasoline Friday was \$1.75 a gallon, oil industry analyst Trilby Lundberg said. The price of mid-grade was \$1.90 a gallon and the price of premium was \$2.02 a gallon. The last time gas was cheaper was on March 2004, Lundberg said, when the national average for regular was \$1.74 a gallon. The all-time high was on July 11, 2008, when the price peaked at \$4.11 a gallon. Of cities surveyed, the nation’s lowest price was \$1.46 in Cheyenne, Wyo. The highest was \$2.54 in Anchorage, Alaska, and the highest in the continental United States was \$2.10 on New York’s Long Island.

## Recycling goes from boom to bust as economy stalls

**CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)**—Norm Steenstra’s budgeting worries mount with each new load of cardboard, aluminum cans and plastics jugs dumped at West Virginia’s largest county recycling center.

Faced with a dramatic slump in the recycling market, the director of the Kanawha County Solid Waste Authority has cut 20 of his 24 employees’ work week to four days from five, shuttered six of the authority’s drop-off stations and is urging residents to hoard their recyclables after informing municipalities with curbside recycling programs that the center will accept only paper until further notice.

### Investors hunt for more clues about economy

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Wall Street heads into another turbulent week on Monday, with Congress still hammering out a bailout for automakers and investors having to digest more data expected to show the economic malaise deepening.

Investors received no respite to worries about the economy over the weekend, with President-elect Barack Obama declaring on Sunday that the situation is destined to get worse before it gets better. Major U.S. stock indexes fell last week after a series of economic reports left little indication that the recession is easing.

Chief among investors’ eco-

“The market is just not there anymore,” Steenstra said.

Just months after riding an incredible high, the recycling market has tanked almost in lockstep with the global economic meltdown. As consumer demand for autos, appliances and new homes dropped, so did the steel and pulp mills’ demand for scrap, paper and other recyclables.

Cardboard that sold for about \$135 a ton in September is now going for \$35 a ton. Plastic bottles have fallen from 25 cents to 2 cents a pound. Aluminum cans dropped nearly half to about 40 cents a pound, and scrap metal tumbled from \$525 a gross ton to about \$100.



Kanawha County Solid Waste Authority Director Norm Steenstra is no longer accepting aluminum cans and plastics from municipal curbside collections, stands at the Slack Street Recycling Center in Charleston, W.Va. on Nov. 21, 2008. AP

### Key senator calls for GM head to step down

**CHICAGO (AP)**—An influential senator drafting a multibillion-dollar bailout for Detroit’s Big Three automakers said Sunday that the head of General Motors should step down, while President-elect Barack Obama accused car industry executives of a persistent “head-in-the sand approach” to long-festering problems.

Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., chairman of the Banking Committee, said GM CEO Rick Wagoner “has to move on” as part of a government-run restructuring that should be a condition of financial life support for the auto industry.

“I think you have got to con-

sider new leadership,” Dodd said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.” Criticized for staying on the sidelines until now, Obama for the first time voiced support for bailout legislation being drafted in Congress.

The sharp criticism from Obama and Dodd reflects deep frustration on Capitol Hill at what many lawmakers regard as years of missteps, mistakes and arrogance by the Big Three automakers. At the same time, Washington is deeply worried about soaring unemployment—533,000 jobs were lost in November alone—and the impact of an auto industry collapse on a nation already deep in recession.



# Nation

## Venue fight: Blackwater guards plan Utah surrender

WASHINGTON (AP)—Five Blackwater Worldwide security guards indicted in Washington for the 2007 shooting of Iraqi civilians plan to surrender to the federal authorities Monday in Utah, people close to the case said, setting up a court fight over the trial site.

The case already is shaping up to be a series of contentious legal battles before the guards can even go to trial. By surrendering in Utah, the home state of one of the guards, the men could argue the case should be heard in a far more conservative, pro-gun venue than Washington, some 2,000 miles away.

The five guards, all military veterans, were indicted on manslaughter charges Thursday for their roles in a 2007 shooting in Baghdad that left 17 Iraqi civilians dead. A sixth guard reached a plea deal with prosecutors to avoid a mandatory 30-year prison sentence.

All the people who discussed details of the case spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the in-

dictment and plea documents remain sealed. They are expected to be made public Monday.

The shooting strained U.S. diplomacy and fueled anti-American sentiment abroad. The Iraqi government has urged the U.S. to prosecute the guards and cheered news of the indictments.

Steven McCool, a lawyer for Blackwater guard and former Marine Donald Ball, confirmed Sunday that his client would surrender in Utah. Ball, a veteran of three tours in Iraq before joining Blackwater, is from West Valley, Utah.

"Donald Ball committed no crime," McCool said. "We are confident that any jury will see this for what it is: a politically motivated prosecution to appease the Iraqi government."

The other guards indicted are Dustin Heard, a former Marine from Knoxville, Tenn.; Evan Liberty, a former Marine from Rochester, N.H.; Nick Slatten, a former Army sergeant from Sparta, Tenn.; and Paul Slough, an Army veteran from Keller, Texas.

It's not uncommon for law-



A bullet hole is seen on a traffic light pole at al-Nisoor square in Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008. At this square, more than a year ago, Blackwater Worldwide security guards shot dead 17 Iraqi civilians.

yers to try to get their cases in front of favorable juries, but often it is difficult in criminal cases. GOP Sen. Ted Stevens unsuccessfully tried to move his recent corruption trial to his home state Alaska from the Dis-

trict of Columbia.

The five men were scheduled to surrender to federal marshals in Utah, where they were expected to ask a federal judge to keep the case from moving to Washington.

Prosecutors are expected to argue that crimes committed overseas are normally charged in Washington. They can also argue that documents related to the sixth guard's plea deal have already been filed in Washington.

The Justice Department has not commented on the case.

In addition to manslaughter charges, prosecutors also plan to use an aggressive law calling for mandatory 30-year prison terms for using machine guns to commit violent crimes.

"It would be outrageous to charge Mr. Ball with firearms offenses relating to guns issued by the State Department," McCool said.

The Blackwater guards, hired by the U.S. to guard State Department diplomats in Iraq, carry automatic weapons and drive heavily armored vehicles equipped with turret guns.

The shooting at the heart of the case involved a convoy of those vehicles responding to a car bombing in downtown Baghdad. Entering a busy traffic circle, the convoy opened fire. Witnesses said Blackwater was unprovoked. The company says its guards were ambushed.

By the time the shooting stopped, 17 Iraqis, including children, were dead and Nisoor Square was a mess of blown-out cars.

## At Pearl Harbor, US response to raid is acclaimed

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP)—While smoke still billowed from the torpedoed ruins of the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, Thomas Griffin's B-25 group took off from its Oregon base to search for Japanese ships or submarines along the West Coast.

They didn't find any, but four months later the group flew from the aircraft carrier USS Hornet and attacked Tokyo. The raid inflicted little damage but boosted U.S. morale and embarrassed the Japanese, who launched the ill-fated attack on Midway Island six weeks later, recalled Griffin, a retired Army Air Corps major from Green Township, outside Cincinnati.

The U.S. military "took Japan entirely by surprise," said Griffin, a keynote speaker at a ceremony Sunday commemorating the 67th anniversary of the Japanese raid that marked America's entry into World War II. He was joined by more than 2,000 World War II veterans and other observers.

Usually, the commemoration



Woody Derby, 90, participates in a Pearl Harbor Commemoration in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008.

focuses on the attack on the USS Arizona, Pearl Harbor and several other installations on Oahu. But Sunday's remembrance centered more on the months following the raid and on an American response that helped defeat the Japanese and render the U.S. a military superpower.

At 7:55 a.m., the moment on a Sunday morning in 1941 when hundreds of Japanese planes began raining bombs and

torpedoes onto Oahu's U.S. military ships and planes, onlookers across from the sunken USS Arizona went silent.

"It was an impossible beginning," Adm. Robert Willard, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in his address. "Yet, look at us today." He noted that Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard recently celebrated 100 years of service and still maintains the far-reaching U.S. Pacific Fleet.

powers and multitasking workers who need to keep track of multiple demands, said one commentary author, brain scientist Martha Farah of the University of Pennsylvania.

"Almost everybody is going to want to use it," Farah said.

"I would be the first in line if safe and effective drugs were developed that trumped caffeine," another author, Michael Gazzaniga of the University of California, Santa Barbara, declared in an e-mail.

## Next stop on gay marriage debate: Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—The gay marriage debate moves to the Midwest this week as the Iowa Supreme Court hears arguments in a challenge to the state's ban on same-sex marriage.

If the high court rules in favor of the half-dozen gay couples who sued, it would make Iowa the fourth state after Massachusetts, California and Connecticut to uphold the right of same-sex couples to legally marry. In California, however, voters have negated the courts by amending the state constitution to ban gay marriage.

The Iowa case has been moving through the legal system for more than three years, and it could take a year or more for the state Supreme Court to issue a ruling after hearing oral arguments Tuesday morning.

Camilla Taylor, an attorney for Lambda Legal, a gay rights organization representing the gay and lesbian couples behind the lawsuit, said the state has historically been a leader in supporting minority and women's rights.

"Iowa has an opportunity to play the role that it often has played in the past—being at the forefront of civil rights struggles—often long before other states were willing to be similarly courageous," she said. "This is not an uncomfortable role for Iowans, and we are looking at them to make a reality out of the promise of equality in the Iowa Constitution."

## ACROSS THE NATION

### In lean times, SoCal residents trade guns for eats

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A program to exchange guns for gifts has brought in a record number of weapons this year as residents hit hard by the economy look under the bed and in closets to find items to trade for groceries. The annual Gifts for Guns program wound down Sunday in Compton, a working class city south of Los Angeles that has long struggled with gun and gang violence. In a program similar to ones in New York and San Francisco, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department allows residents to anonymously relinquish firearms in return for \$100 gift cards for Ralphs supermarkets, Target department stores or Best Buy electronics stores. Turning in assault rifles yields double that amount. In years past, Target and Best Buy were the cards of choice, with residents wanting presents for the holidays. This year, most asked for the supermarket cards, said sheriff's Sgt. Byron Woods. "People just don't have the money to buy the food these days," he said.

### Frugal farmer leaves \$2M to his tiny Pa. church

BLAIRSVILLE, Pa. (AP)—It's like a gift from God. A tiny church in western Pennsylvania inherited more than \$2 million from a farmer who lived in a mobile home. The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review reported Sunday that John Ferguson left his entire estate to Hopewell United Methodist Church near the town of Black Lick. The 71-year-old farmer attended the church before dying in January 2007. The gift has been in probate since then. The church has just 80 members. Hopewell pastor Jason McQueen says a panel of congregation members will choose projects to be funded annually from the income generated by Ferguson's estate.

### Drone lands in ND in preparation for border patrol

FARGO, N.D. (AP)—After two failed tries, an unmanned aircraft expected to be the first to patrol the northern U.S. border completed a flight from Arizona to North Dakota. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials said the Predator B drone touched down Saturday at the Grand Forks Air Force Base after a six-hour flight from Libby Army Airfield in Sierra Vista, Ariz. "The aviators all brag about the perfect landing," said Michael Corcoran, deputy director for air operations at U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Air and Marine office in Grand Forks. "I guess we'll brag about this one, as well," he said. The drone is scheduled to begin patrolling the northern U.S. border in January. Its flights will originate from the Grand Forks base.

## Scientists back brain drugs for healthy people

NEW YORK (AP)—Healthy people should have the right to boost their brains with pills, like those prescribed for hyperactive kids or memory-impaired older folks, several scientists contend in a provocative commentary.

College students are already illegally taking prescription stimulants like Ritalin to help them study, and demand for such drugs is likely to grow elsewhere, they say.

"We should welcome new methods of improving our brain

function," and doing it with pills is no more morally objectionable than eating right or getting a good night's sleep, these experts wrote in an opinion piece published online Sunday by the journal *Nature*.

The commentary calls for more research and a variety of steps for managing the risks.

As more effective brain-boosting pills are developed, demand for them is likely to grow among middle-aged people who want youthful memory



# Asia

## Pakistan targets suspected Mumbai attackers

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)**—Pakistani troops seized a camp used by the extremist group blamed in the Mumbai attacks and arrested more than 12 people, militants and a security official said Monday.

The raid was the first known action by Islamabad in response to the attacks, which have sharply raised tensions between nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India and raised concerns in Washington over its campaign against al-Qaida in the region.

India says the Mumbai siege was carried out and plotted by Pakistani

militants belonging to the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba. It and the United States are demanding Pakistan crack down on the perpetrators.

Troops briefly exchanged fire with people at the camp during Sunday's raid close to the town of Muzaffarabad in the Pakistani part of the disputed Kashmir region, the militants said.

A senior intelligence official confirmed the raid and arrests.

He said the detainees were being questioned over any possible links to the Mumbai attacks and several injured people were being treated at a

military hospital.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of his job.

The militants say the camp was used until 2004 by Lashkar-e-Taiba to train recruits to fight Indian rule in its section of the Kashmir. More recently, it was used by Lashkar's parent organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa for education and charity work, they say.

The militants spoke on condition of anonymity because they belong to an illegal organization.

Analysts say Lashkar-e-Taiba was

created the with help of Pakistan's intelligence agencies in the 1980s to act as a proxy fighting force in Indian Kashmir.

Many suspect elements within the agencies keep some links with Lashkar and other militants in the country, either to use against India or in neighboring Afghanistan.

Islamabad's young civilian government has denied any of its state agencies were involved in the Mumbai attacks, but said it was possible that the militants were Pakistanis. It has pledged to cooperate with India, noting it too is a victim of terrorism.

## Negotiators set for 'tough' North Korea nuclear talks

**BEIJING (AP)**—Japan's top nuclear envoy joined other negotiators Sunday in downplaying expectations for a new round of talks on North Korea's disarmament, saying it would be tough to work out a detailed plan for verifying the North's past nuclear activities.

North Korea—which conducted a nuclear test in 2006—agreed last year to disable its reactor in exchange for aid. But the North recently denied having agreed to allow inspectors to take samples from its nuclear complex to verify its past activities.

The six-nation talks over the next three days are expected to focus on how to verify the North's accounting of its program, but negotiators have said they expect the process to be difficult.

U.S., South Korean and Japanese nuclear negotiators met in Beijing for discussions ahead of the talks, which start Monday.

The officials discussed U.S. nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill's meetings on Thursday and Friday with his North Korean counterpart in Singapore, Japan's Akitaka Saiki told reporters.



### PACQUIAO PANDEMONIUM

Filipinos wave a Philippine flag as they celebrate the victory of Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao over Oscar De La Hoya while they watch it beamed live via satellite at the Tondo Sports Complex in Manila, Philippines on Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008. From five-star hotel lounges and army camps to Manila's burgeoning slums, Filipinos gathered in huge numbers to cheer the country's boxing icon, as officials say the victory provided the country a momentary respite from financial worries.

AP

## McCain: Afghanistan situation will get harder

**KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)**—Sen. John McCain said Sunday that the situation in Afghanistan will get more difficult before it gets easier—"just like the surge in Iraq was"—as the U.S. prepares to pour thousands more troops into the country, including on the doorsteps of Kabul.

The former Republican presidential candidate, who is to report back to President-elect Barack Obama, visited the southern province of Helmand, where he said NATO

forces are at a stalemate with insurgents. Though Helmand has for years been the responsibility of British forces, McCain said the U.S. will focus more on the region—the heartland of the Taliban movement and a center for opium poppy production.

"We're going to have additional troops and additional help," McCain said of the country's south.

The trip comes at a time of increasing violence in Afghanistan,

where a record 32,000 U.S. troops are now stationed, with requests for 20,000 more from American commanders.

Violence has also spiked across the border in Pakistan, where gunmen blasted their way into two transport terminals on Sunday and torched more than 160 vehicles destined for U.S. and Afghan National Army troops.

The U.S. military said its losses in the raid near the northwestern city

of Peshawar would have "minimal" impact on anti-Taliban operations, but the attack fueled concern that insurgents are trying to choke a vital American supply line.

In Afghanistan, insurgents this year have moved closer to Kabul, taking over wide swaths of countryside just south of the Afghan capital that are now unsafe. Attacks on supply convoys on the road leading from Kabul to the southern city of Kandahar are commonplace.

## Japan struggles to boost homegrown food varieties

**NARA, Japan (AP)**—Masayuki Miura's restaurant is radically out of step with modern Japanese tastes. No Australian beef hamburgers, no mountains of fried Brazilian chicken, no imported steaks. Not a Chinese cabbage in sight.

Instead, Miura and his wife Yoko serve up a 100 percent made-in-Japan offering of fish and locally grown organic rice and vegetables, including centuries-old Japanese heirloom varieties.

"We need more people to eat Japanese vegetables," declared Miura,

whose restaurant overlooks his almost five-acre farm in western Japan. "Of course, it's a food culture issue. Hamburgers don't have Japanese vegetables in them."

No, they don't—and many in Japan consider that a major problem.

The Japanese on average get only 40 percent of their calories from domestic food, down from 73 percent in 1965, the government says, putting the country's self-sufficiency rate near the bottom of the 30-country Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The United States, an agricultural exporter, has a 128 percent rate, and even a smaller nation like Britain can provide 70 percent of its citizens' calories.

Amid rising world food prices and a series of imported food contamination scandals, Japan is afraid it is too reliant on foreign food. The government released a report late last year showing what Japanese would have to eat without imports. The typical lunch: One potato, two sweet potatoes and a quarter of an apple.

"We have to wonder whether Japan should continue buying up food from around the world," said Hide-nobu Ogawa, a food safety official with the Agriculture Ministry. "Japan has economic power now. But if we lose strength in the future, can we get enough food to survive?"

The government has set a target of boosting the self-sufficiency rate up to 45 percent by 2015, and has launched a series of campaigns—from open markets featuring Japanese foods to commercials urging people to eat more rice.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Taliban chief: More fighting to come

**KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)**—Fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Omar is promising more violence over the coming year, even as the U.S. plans to deploy thousands more troops in hopes of turning around the deteriorating war in Afghanistan. In a statement posted Sunday on a militant-linked Web site, Omar also rejected President Hamid Karzai's calls for peace talks until foreign troops leave the country. Afghanistan is going through its most violent period since the Taliban was ousted in the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Omar released his message at the start of Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, or the "Feast of the Sacrifice."

#### Clashes disrupt fourth phase of Kashmir elections

**SRINAGAR, India (AP)**—Large crowds voted in several towns in Indian Kashmir on Sunday, while separatists in other areas boycotted the polls and clashed with government forces in the fourth phase of state elections in the disputed Himalayan region. Muslim separatist leaders have called for a boycott of the vote in Jammu-Kashmir state, saying it will only entrench India's hold on the region. Some have been detained in recent months under a law that allows police to hold people for up to two years without trial. Thousands of paramilitary soldiers and police wearing bulletproof jackets and carrying automatic weapons patrolled polling places across the region. The elections for the state legislature, which began Nov. 17, are being held in seven phases through Dec. 24. The voting has been largely peaceful with a higher-than-expected turnout of over 60 percent.

#### Coal mine blast kills 7 in Vietnam

**HANOI, Vietnam (AP)**—A blast Monday at a coal mine in northern Vietnam killed at least seven workers and injured 15, a company executive said. Rescue workers pulled their bodies from a 750-foot-deep (230-meter-deep) tunnel in Quang Ninh province and were still searching for another victim following the methane explosion early Monday morning, said Nguyen Van Thuan of the Khe Cham Coal company. Fifteen miners were being treated for burns, while 103 others escaped unhurt, he said. Authorities believe the miners died from severe burns. Investigators were trying to determine what started the blast, Thuan said. Quang Ninh, about 120 miles (190 kilometers) east of capital Hanoi, is Vietnam's main coal mining region.

#### 2 Filipino robbery suspects who fled weekend carnage killed in shootout with police

**MANILA, Philippines (AP)**—Two robbery suspects who escaped a weekend shootout with police that left 16 people dead in the crime-ridden Philippine capital were fatally shot after a car chase early Monday, officials said. The suspects fired on police vehicles following their car in Caloocan city, a Manila suburb, triggering a gunfight that killed both men, said metropolitan Manila police chief Leopoldo Bataoil. The victims were allegedly members of a notorious well-armed robbery gang blamed for Saturday's carnage in another Manila suburb, where the suspected criminals started firing at police and passers-by after sensing they were being tailed. Authorities said they had received a tip the group was planning to rob a warehouse and deployed dozens of officers. The gunmen were armed with M-16 rifles fitted with grenade launchers, police said.



## World

## Muslim hajj pilgrimage culminates on Mt. Arafat



Saudi police secure the street as Muslim pilgrims pray on a rocky hill called the Mountain of Mercy, on the Plain of Arafat near Mecca, Saudi Arabia, Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008. Nearly 3 million pilgrims converged Saturday around the holy city of Mecca at the beginning of the 5-day hajj pilgrimage, a lifelong dream for many Muslims.

**MOUNT ARAFAT, Saudi Arabia (AP)**—Creating a sea of white robes, nearly 3 million Muslims converged on a rocky desert hill outside Mecca on Sunday to perform the ritual of forgiveness marking the climax of the annual hajj.

Chants of “at thy service, my God, at thy service,” reverberated through the valley as the pilgrims stood to pray for God’s forgiveness in the most spiritual moment of the entire hajj.

But while most spent the day praying and reading Islam’s holy book, the Quran, thousands—mostly Iranians, Lebanese, Iraqis and Bahrainis—held a rally inside their tents to denounce the United States and Israel. Called

the “disavowal of pagans ceremony,” the Iranian-sponsored, anti-U.S. protest is held annually at the hajj, bringing a whiff of politics into what is otherwise an entirely religious event. Saudi Arabia warned before the start of the pilgrimage that it would not tolerate any anti-U.S. demonstrations, but the rally was apparently permitted because it stayed inside the tents.

“Pilgrims should not raise any slogans other than that of Islam,” said Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh, the Saudi grand mufti.

In 1987, the rally led to clashes with Saudi security forces and 402 pilgrims, mostly Iranians, were killed.

But Iranian cleric, Moham-

mad Tabadkani, said the rally was Islam’s response against the U.S. government’s brutality and oppression. Many Iranians want opposition to the U.S. war in Iraq and Israeli policies to be heard during the hajj.

“The disavowal of pagans ceremony is based on Quranic verses. The rally here is not against any specific country but against policies of specific governments that seek to dominate Muslims or treat them unjustly,” Tabadkani said.

But many pilgrims disagree, preferring the pilgrimage to be an entirely spiritual experience between the worshipper and God.

“During the hajj, the priority is to perform the rituals and not politics,” said Ahmed Malek, a

pilgrim from Maldives who did not participate in the rally.

The Saudi grand mufti used the occasion of the day’s ritual to warn Muslims that extremism could lead to terrorism and urged the faithful to show “the bright face of Islam” and spread teachings calling for “forgiveness, peace and love.”

Al-Sheikh’s sermon, which was cited by the official news agency, also declared that the world economic crisis stemmed from an abandonment of Islamic prohibition of usury.

According to Islamic teachings, the hajj is a spiritual journey that cleanses the soul and wins absolution. A Muslim who performs the hajj washes away his sins.

## Native hunters: Climate is thinning caribou herds

**POZNAN, Poland (AP)**—Chief Bill Erasmus of the Dene nation in northern Canada brought a stark warning about the climate crisis: The once abundant herds of caribou are dwindling, rivers are running lower and the ice is too thin to hunt on.

Erasmus raised his concerns in recent days on the sidelines of a U.N. climate conference, seeking to ensure that North America’s indigenous peoples are not left out in the cold when it comes to any global warming negotiations.

Erasmus, the 54-year-old elected leader of 30,000 native Americans in Canada, and representatives of other indigenous peoples met with the U.N.’s top climate official, Yvo de Boer, and have lobbied national delegations to recognize them as an “expert group” that can participate in the talks like other nongovernment organizations.

“We bring our traditional knowledge to the table that other people don’t have,” he said.

## Curbs make Gaza fete like turkey-less Thanksgiving

**RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)**—Salah Afana’s cattle business usually booms with the approach of the Muslim feast of the sacrifice. But this year he’s hit a snag: He’s out of cows.

Afana, Gaza’s largest cattle trader, has been unable to import cows since Israel shut the strip’s borders last month in response to Palestinian rocket fire. He has since sold all his stock—less than half of what he sold last year—and is turning customers away.

The Gaza-wide shortage of cows and sheep for slaughter is

one of many disappointments Gazans face before Eid al-Adha, the most important holiday in the Muslim calendar. For them it’s tantamount to Thanksgiving without turkey.

The four-day holiday beginning Monday is supposed to be one of the year’s most joyful, but nothing is as it should be, Gazans say. An Israeli blockade on the ruling Hamas government has caused shortages of basic goods, and Palestinian political squabbling has kept thousands of would-be pilgrims

from traveling to Mecca.

On top of that, their banks have run out of currency, depriving thousands of civil servants of salaries.

It’s a sharp contrast to Bethlehem, in the West Bank, which after several bleak years is finally getting a Christmas season to cheer about. Hotels are booked solid, Manger Square outside Christ’s traditional birthplace is already bustling with tourists, and Palestinian and Israeli security forces are working together to keep the peace.

## Iraq to guard historic sites with police commandos

**BAGHDAD (AP)**—Iraq will dispatch police commandos to safeguard its archaeological heritage, the government said Sunday, announcing plans to protect sites such as the ancient city of Babylon that were left vulnerable to looting after the U.S. invasion in 2003.

The announcement comes as

Iraqi forces lay out plans to take over their own security under a recently approved pact with the United States that sets a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops by the end of 2011.

Lt. Gen. Hussein al-Awadi, the commander of Iraq’s National Police force, said a new agency will be created

to secure archaeological sites, which are only beginning to recover from the widespread looting in the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion.

He said a similar directorate has already been established to protect embassies and diplomatic missions, which will eventually include the U.S. Embassy.

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Ghana votes in rare example of African democracy

**ACCRA, Ghana (AP)**—Election officials began counting ballots late Sunday in one of Africa’s rare democracies, where voters are painfully aware of the example they are setting on a continent better known for coups, rigged elections and one-man rule. In courtyards throughout the capital, election officials put police tape around the plywood tables where they began sorting ballots. Hundreds of onlookers formed walls around the counting tables, standing on chairs to get a view and whooping as the stack of their candidate of choice grew taller. The count capped a long day in this humid capital. The election began the night before, as hundreds of voters slept on the pavement outside their polling stations in an effort to be first. Voters spoke of carrying the burden of the continent’s numerous failures as they waited to vote.

### Georgian province in uneasy embrace of Moscow

**SUKHUMI, Abkhazia (AP)**—Russia’s footprint is everywhere in this breakaway Georgian province, from billboards featuring its president, Dmitry Medvedev, to its joint military exercises with the Abkhaz navy. “Peace! Freedom! Independence!” proclaims a roadside billboard featuring Medvedev and Abkhaz President Sergei Bagapsh. Medvedev, although short, appears nearly twice as big as Bagapsh. It could be a metaphor for how some Abkhaz feel since Moscow recognized their statehood following the August Russian-Georgian war: grateful for the support, but afraid of being swallowed up. Officials in this territory of broad Black Sea beaches, lush fruit orchards and snowy mountains acknowledge that Russian soldiers have been interfering in their internal affairs. For example, Russian soldiers regularly block access to foreigners seeking to cross the Inguri River into Abkhazia from Georgia, and harass those who venture into areas under their control.

### Somalis in US fear sons are returning to fight

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)**—Three Somali families tell similar stories: A son or nephew disappears. A passport is gone. Days later the phone rings, and the teen says he’s in Somalia. The phone call is abrupt and short on details. And then, nothing. Relatives of three teenagers say they fear their loved ones are victims, brainwashed to return to Somalia to fight. The impoverished nation on the Horn of Africa is caught up in an Islamic insurgency and hasn’t had a functioning government in 17 years. “We are not sure who is responsible,” said Hussein Samatar, a community leader and uncle to a 17-year-old who traveled to Somalia. “But we, as a community, believe they have to be held accountable.” Samatar and other relatives confirmed Saturday that their loved ones left Minneapolis, home to one of the nation’s largest Somali communities, together on Nov. 4. The young men were identified as Burhan Hassan, 17, Mohamoud Hassan, 18, and Abdisalam Ali, 19.



## Overdrive

## 2009 Ford Focus SES: 'Spunk' helps overcome penny pinching

By WARREN BROWN  
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

**WASHINGTON**—Somewhere between birth and what is now the possible demise of the domestic automobile industry, "American" became a bad word.

There is little doubt that the industry had much to do with this transformation. It has a way of snatching mediocrity from exceptionality. Need proof? Look at this week's subject vehicle, the 2009 Ford Focus SES coupe.

It is one of the best subcompact cars sold in the United States. But why isn't it the best? Check out its braking system, which employs exceptionally good disc brakes up front and more-mediocre-than-thou drum brakes in the rear.

It is the kind of self-defeating, cost-cutting craziness that Ford and its Detroit siblings have engaged in too often—saving a few pennies on production costs here and there, only to wind up having to market otherwise excellent vehicles with steep, money-losing discounts.

The good news is that domestic automobile manufacturers nowadays do much less of that kind of thing. They are long removed from the really bad old days when, corrupted by success unchallenged by foreign rivals, they became fat and careless, more interested



THE WASHINGTON POST

Ford's designers have given the 2009 Focus SES coupe, a front-wheel-drive economy compact car, a little jazz, nicely restyling the front fascia and giving the rear something approaching funk.

in pleasing Wall Street than in building quality cars and trucks and, thus, abusive of the faith of loyal consumers.

That was Old Detroit. It hasn't been around for nearly 15 years. But reality has a hard time catching up with perception, especially when the latter is occasionally fueled by avoidable gaffes, such as mating less-effective drum brakes with

more-effective discs to save some money in production.

It is the kind of thing that opens the domestics to unfair ridicule, obscuring the many good things they have done and are doing, casting a long shadow over New Detroit, which is genuinely, almost religiously dedicated to product innovation and improvement.

The front-wheel-drive Focus

SES coupe, for example, can be used to demonstrate progress, too. Overall vehicle construction is solid. Fit and finish are excellent. Interior materials, although not the best in the business (an honor that goes to Volkswagen and Audi), most certainly are better than they've ever been.

It's also a joy to drive. "It's got spunk," said my associate, Ria Manglapus. It's wonderfully agile in city traffic. It's a

willing fellow traveler on high-speed highways. And it has a modest appetite for regular unladed gasoline, consuming it at the rate of 24 miles per gallon in the city and 35 miles per gallon on the highway.

Detroit's critics—and there are more than a few these days when Ford, General Motors and Chrysler are coming to Washington beseeching emergency federal financial assistance—

are fond of accusing the domestic industry of being a laggard in innovation. It is a bogus charge, born of ignorance.

General Motors, for example, working through its OnStar subsidiary, pioneered a mobile emergency communications system that is the envy of the global automobile industry. More than that, it has saved several thousand lives and helped federal emergency management officials track vehicle traffic flows out of disaster areas. Now comes Ford with its Microsoft/Sync infotainment/emergency communications system, which allows drivers to control a variety of entertainment, telephone and emergency contact devices with their voice alone. It is simple, intuitive. It works exceptionally well and adds value to any Ford vehicle in which it is installed.

Here's hoping that the domestic automobile companies weather the financial storm, largely brought on by financial institutions that mistook the concept of the Ponzi scheme as valid, ethical economic policy.

The domestic car companies have done much less harm and arguably much more good than that. They have been responsive to consumer demand, which means that Ford will get rid of drum brakes in the Focus SES and other cars as soon as it understands that consumers don't mind paying extra for something that is demonstrably better.

## Retiring the negative image of buses

By SARAH KARUSH  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—Think of the typical city bus, and Americans are likely to picture old vehicles with hard seats and noisy brakes that belch diesel fumes as they jerk from stop to stop.

Transit agencies want people to take another look. They are rolling out more attractive and comfortable buses, convenient express routes and even on-board Wi-Fi.

High gas prices and a tight economy have made all kinds of transit, including buses, more popular. In the first three months of 2008, 2.6 billion trips were taken on public transportation in the U.S., a 3 percent increase over the first quarter of 2007, according to the American Public Transportation Association. Bus ridership increased 2 percent to nearly 1.5 billion trips.

Buses may lack the hipness of subways or light rail, but they are the best hope for accommodating large numbers of new riders quickly and affordably. To harness the increased demand for mass transit, officials are turning to new ways of delivering and marketing

their bus service.

Ted Mann, an Arlington, Virginia, resident, has been a regular bus rider since totaling his car a year ago and has noticed the improvements.

Mann, 66, said the Washington area's extensive transit service has meant he hasn't felt compelled to buy a new car. Still, he can testify to the image problem that buses face.

"The other night I was with a group of people, and the fastest thing to do was to get on the bus. Some of these people had never been on a bus—as if this was some awful low-class way," he said.

Nationally, bus riders tend to be poorer than rail passengers. According to a 2007 national study by public transportation association, 21 percent of trips by rail are made by people with household incomes less than \$25,000, compared with 43 percent of bus trips. On the other side of the spectrum, 30 percent of rail trips are made by people with incomes of \$75,000 or higher, while only 12 percent of bus trips are.

Metro, the Washington region's transit agency, hopes a makeover will help buses'

public relations problem. This month the agency is introducing new buses with a modern red and silver color scheme, cushioned seats and sound-deadening floors for a quieter ride.

"People who wouldn't normally take the bus—they can see this beautiful piece of art here and want to take public transportation," said Milo Victoria, Metro's assistant general manager for bus operations.

Elsewhere, transit agencies from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Cincinnati to Oakland, California, have introduced Wi-Fi on buses, particularly those on longer commuter routes. Metro plans to make Wi-Fi available at elaborate new bus shelters in Arlington, which will also feature heated seats and electronic signs with bus arrival and departure information.

And transit systems are looking for inexpensive ways to make bus trips faster. Cincinnati's Metro received permission this month to make permanent an arrangement that allows buses to travel in the left shoulder of Interstate 71 when traffic is heavy. Other systems use technology that keeps traffic lights green when a bus approaches.

## NUTS &amp; BOLTS

By WARREN BROWN  
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

## COMPLAINTS

Those drum brakes! They prevent the Focus SES from being best. Also, I'm willing to bet that if Ford used VW/Audi-quality interior materials, Ford consumers would not mind paying for them.

## RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING

The car has the personality of a very likable four-wheel scooter. It handles well in city traffic. Acceleration is fast enough to get you a ticket on the highway.

## HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT

Ford's designers have given this one a little jazz, nicely restyling the front fascia and giving the rear something approaching funk.

## BODY STYLE/LAYOUT

The Ford Focus is a front-engine, front-wheel-drive economy compact available as a coupe or a sedan. The coupe comes in two trim levels—base SE and upscale SES. The sedan comes in four—S, SE, SES and SEL.

## ENGINE/TRANSMISSION

There is one engine for all Focus models—a 2-liter, inline four-cylinder, 16-valve engine that develops 140 horsepower at 6,000 RPM and 136 foot-pounds of torque at 4,250 RPM.

The tested SES coupe had a five-speed manual transmission. A four-speed automatic with overdrive is available.

## CAPACITIES

There are seats for five people. Cargo capacity is 13.8 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 13.5 gallons of regular unleaded.

## MILEAGE

The federal mileage ratings of 24 miles per gallon in the city and 35 miles per gallon on the highway were on the mark.

Safety: Ford gets a raspberry here for making antilock brakes optional. It gets another for rear drum brakes and yet another for making electronic stability control optional. And, what the heck, another for not offering electronic traction control on this model. Side and head air bags are standard.

## PRICE

The base price on the 2009 Ford Focus SES coupe is \$17,570. Dealer's invoice price on that model is \$16,284. Price as tested is \$21,130, including \$2,865 in options and a \$695 destination charge. Dealer's price as tested is \$19,471. There is a \$1,000 rebate on this one. Prices are sourced from Ford, Edmunds.com and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

## PURSE-STRINGS NOTE

You can bargain on the Focus—a good little car surrounded by worthy but pricier competitors.



## Life &amp; Style

## Take a deep breath and count to infinity

By CRAIG WHITLOCK  
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Tom Sietas, a 31-year-old German, has blown away the competition in the nascent sport of "free diving," in which people vie to see how long they can hold their breath underwater.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Nobody can take a deeper breath than Tom Sietas.

The 31-year-old German has blown away the competition in the nascent sport of "free diving," in which people vie to see how long they can hold their breath underwater. Thanks to a large set of lungs and advanced training techniques, Sietas has pushed the boundaries of physical endurance far beyond what was thought possible.

Doctors once assumed brain damage was certain for anyone whose respiration stopped for more than three or four minutes. And yet, on June 7, in a swimming pool in Athens, Sietas submerged himself underwater for 10 minutes and 12 seconds, shattering the world record by more than a minute.

Sietas, a lanky fellow who stands

6-foot-4 and weighs 165 pounds, doesn't appear any worse for the wear. "I'm a pioneer in my sport," he said in an interview, relaxing at a cafe at this river city in northern Germany.

He's taking a short break from training these days after a busy summer. In September, he sat in a plexiglass tank of water on the stage of "Live With Regis and Kelly" in New York and vied for the record in a slightly different category, in which he was allowed to soak up pure oxygen beforehand. This time, he held his breath for 17 minutes and 19 seconds before he bobbed to the surface.

"Tom, are you OK?" a nervous Kelly Ripa asked her German guest as he opened his mouth to gulp in fresh air.

"Much better," he replied with a smirk.

In July in Hamburg, he set the world record for swimming the longest distance

underwater without taking a breath: 700 feet, or almost nine lengths of the pool.

Like other extreme sports, free diving has exploded in popularity in recent years, attracting an estimated 10,000 competitors to organized events.

The sport draws on a long tradition of underwater breath-holding, including Asian pearl divers who swim to depths of 100 feet to harvest oysters and abalone. Even today, most free divers prefer to test their limits in the freedom of the ocean, instead of indoor pools.

Sietas discovered the sport in 2000 on a trip to Jamaica. He was scuba diving but was constricted from pain in his ears that got worse the deeper he went. Instructors taught him how to equalize the inner-ear pressure, a trick that worked so well he ditched his scuba tanks and began testing how deep he could go.

"I was so happy," he said. "I could go down 15 to 20 meters"—50 to 65 feet—and the whole undersea world was just so wonderful."

His scuba instructors noticed that he had a talent for holding his breath. They provided a little coaching. By the end of his vacation, Sietas was going without air for more than four minutes.

"I was like, 'Whoa, if you put some effort into it, Tom, you could be really good,'" he recalled.

Sietas attributes his success to a strict training regimen that he has developed himself. It is a combination of strength exercises, endurance workouts and concentration tactics. When he is submerged, he goes completely limp and blanks his mind to lower his heart rate and conserve energy.

"I have a strong will and a strong discipline," he said.

## The salutary effect of gratitude

BY A TIMES STAFF WRITER  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

If you want to feel happier—fast—grab a pen and paper.

One secret to happiness might be in expressive writing: specifically, writing letters to people showing gratitude. Steven Toepfer, an assistant professor of family and consumer studies at Kent State University, conducted a study to determine what would make people feel happier, especially in a consumer-oriented culture in which things are supposed to bring us joy.

He had students write one letter every two weeks for a six-week period to people who had had a positive influence on their lives. The letters had to be positive, include some insight and reflection, not venture into trivial waters and express great appreciation. After each letter was written, the students took a survey that gauged their mood, their satisfaction with life and their feelings of gratitude and happiness.

According to Toepfer, the students' levels of happiness increased after each letter, and 75 percent of them said they wanted to keep writing the letters, even when the study was finished.

"The most powerful thing in our lives is our social network," said Toepfer in a news release. "It doesn't have to be large, and you don't always need to be the life of the party, but just having one or two significant connections in your life has shown to have terrific psychological and physical benefits."

He added, "We are all walking around with an amazing resource: gratitude. It helps us express and enjoy, appreciate, be thankful and satisfied with a little effort. We all have it, and we need to use it to improve our quality of life."

## Tenor cries betrayal as Milan's La Scala dumps him

MILAN, Italy (AP)—It was classic La Scala intrigue.

The famed opera house threw its understudy into one of its biggest nights Sunday, removing tenor Giuseppe Filianoti at the last minute for the season-opening premiere of "Don Carlo" after he made mistakes during a dress rehearsal.

American tenor Stuart Neill, who has mostly performed in second and third casts, got the break of a lifetime in the title role and survived his unexpected debut of "Don Carlo" with generous applause—and a smattering of boos.

That's not bad for the self-ordained critics of La Scala's uppermost balconies, who in another era hurled salami and risotto at singers they deemed unworthy. In 1982, they even booed legendary tenor Luciano Pavarotti as he sang "Don Carlo," considered among the most difficult tenor roles.

"Tough crowd, but no I wasn't nervous at all," the 43-year-old Neill said backstage still in costume just minutes after the curtain came down.

Filianoti didn't go quietly, telling the Milan daily Corriere della Sera that he had been "betrayed" by the opera house, "stabbed in the back at the last minute."

"La Scala wanted me to say I was sick. But I, Giuseppe Filianoti, am in perfect condition, ready to engage myself in a role in which I feel secure," the paper quoted him as saying.



In this photo released by La Scala theater, U.S. tenor Stuart Neill performs Giuseppe Verdi's opera Don Carlo in Milan's La Scala theater, Italy, Sunday Dec. 7, 2008.

Filianoti showed up for the first act, but left without watching his understudy through to the final duet with Elisabetta, sung by soprano Fiorenza Cedolins.

The opening was conducted by Milan-native Daniele Gatti, making his debut at a La Scala premiere. The night is one of Europe's most highly anticipated cultural events of the season, regularly attended by the cream of Milanese society, captains

of Italian industry and heads of government. This year, the presidents of Rwanda and Togo attended.

The reaction was mixed—with boos sprinkled in with the final applause, a relatively parsimonious eight minutes. The longest and most unreserved shows of appreciation were for Cedolins, mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick as the princess of Eboli, bass Ferruccio Furlanetto as Phillip and baritone Dalibor Jenis as Rodrigo.

La Scala's general manager Stephane Lissner shrugged off the boos as anger over the tenor swap—not the performance.

"What matters is what we heard, and anyone who heard it, knows that the orchestra, the chorus truly performed an exceptional 'Don Carlo,'" Lissner said.

Neill, a native of Atlanta, Ga., was thrown into the title role just a day before the premiere.

The switch was a huge break for the tenor who made his debut at La Scala in 1997, the same year he debuted at New York's Metropolitan Opera as Arturo in Bellini's "I Puritani."

Since then, he has sung a total of just 13 performances at the Met—including as the Italian singer in Strauss' "Der Rosenkavalier" and Alfredo in Verdi's "La Traviata"—but none at all since 2000. He has also performed in other major opera houses, including Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the Vienna Staatsoper and The Royal Opera Covent Garden.

La Scala's audience—especially the inhabitants of the uppermost balconies known as the "loggionisti"—is infamous for its ruthlessness. The "loggionisti" don't hesitate to shower boos on any singer, no matter how renowned, if they feel their exacting standards aren't met.

Last year, tenor Roberto Alagna walked off stage during a performance of "Aida" when he was booed during the opening aria.



# Nobel winner: Internet might have stopped Hitler

**STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)**—The spread of information on the Internet has given the world a new tool to forestall conflicts, Nobel literature prize winner Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio said Sunday.

In his Nobel lecture to the Swedish Academy, the 68-year-old Frenchman said an earlier introduction of information technology could even have prevented World War II.

"Who knows, if the Internet had existed at the time, perhaps Hitler's

criminal plot would not have succeeded—ridicule might have prevented it from ever seeing the light of day," he said.

Still, the globe-trotting writer noted that access to computers remains a luxury to many in the developing world and said eradicating hunger and illiteracy remain the "two great urgent tasks" of humankind.

"Literacy and the struggle against hunger are connected, closely interdependent," he said. "One cannot suc-

ceed without the other. Both of them require, indeed urge, us to act."

Le Clezio was praised by the Nobel jury at the Swedish Academy for his "poetic adventure and sensual ecstasy" in such works as "Terra Amata," "The Book of Flights" and "Desert."

Though he was born in France, Le Clezio's father is British and he holds dual nationality with Mauritius, where his family has roots. He spends much of his time in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Recalling his beginnings as a writer, Le Clezio said the books that had the greatest impact on him were anthologies of travelers tales, including those of Marco Polo.

"Those books gave me a taste for adventure, gave me a sense of the vastness of the real world, a means to explore it through instinct and the senses rather than through knowledge," he said in a speech delivered in French.

Le Clezio called on publishers to make books available to a broader

public in developing countries and to publish more material in lesser-known languages. "In Africa, Southeast Asia, Mexico, or the South Sea Islands, books remain an inaccessible luxury," Le Clezio said.

He will receive the Nobel Prize in literature at a ceremony on Wednesday. The medicine, chemistry, physics and economics prizes are also handed out in Stockholm, while the Nobel Peace Prize is presented in Oslo, Norway.

# Streisand, President Bush share awkward smooch

By **BRETT ZONGKER**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—Barbra Streisand got an awkward kiss on the cheek from the president, and yes, she gave him a smooch back.

Streisand, a vocal critic of President George W. Bush, was a guest Sunday at the White House just before one of Washington's few A-list events: the Kennedy Center Honors.

"Art transcends politics this weekend," the longtime Democrat said beforehand. Still, she said it would have been "lovely" if she could have received the award while President-elect Barack Obama was in office.

The singer and actress was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors, along with actor Morgan Freeman, country singer George Jones, dancer and choreographer Twyla Tharp and musicians Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey of The Who.

The honors recognize individuals who helped define American culture through the performing arts, part of the living memorial to President John F. Kennedy.

The hug and kiss between Bush and Babs—who has previously said Bush's election wins in 2000 and 2004 were stolen—was replayed later on video at a Kennedy Center gala. The crowd couldn't help but laugh.

Queen Latifah opened the tribute to Streisand, saying she "threw out the rule book" to chart her own career. "She took to the stage like butter on a bagel," Latifah added in a video tribute.

Idina Menzel from Broadway's "Rent" and "Wicked" sang "Don't Rain on My Parade" from Streisand's 1964 musical "Funny Girl." She mixed in some new lyrics—"Hey there, Ms. Streisand, I am your biggest fan."

Beyonce Knowles rose from the stage floor to sing "The Way We Were." And the young musical star Ne-Yo grooved to Streisand's 1965 hit "Lover, Come Back to Me," with four male dancers.

"Barbra Streisand is the epitome of emotion in music," Ne-Yo said. "You

backdrop of the Union Jack, in honor of the British band.

"The full impact of it is still sinking in," Townshend said of the honor. "It feels a bit iconic."

Rock singer Rob Thomas sang "Baba O'Riley," and the British flag

the first musical group to sign on for an emotional Radio City Music Hall benefit concert after 9/11.

Jones, who earned the nickname "No Show Jones" for performances he missed during his wild drinking days, promised to show up this time. The 77-

a favorite on the president's iPod, said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Garth Brooks, Randy Travis and Alan Jackson gave Jones a tip of the hat with performances of the country legend's work. And fellow country singer Shelby Lynne sang "Amazing Grace."

Tickets to the gala sell for as much as \$4,000. Last year, the event raised \$5 million to support Kennedy Center programs. The show will air Dec. 30 on CBS.

The awards were presented Saturday night at a State Department dinner. Rice addressed each honoree, beginning with Freeman, who once played the president in the movie "Deep Impact."

"I know that when you played the African-American president of the United States, most people thought that would happen when a comet hit," Rice said, drawing laughs and cheers. "But wonder of wonders, fiction has become true."

Freeman, 71, who starred this year in "The Dark Knight," also made headlines after suffering broken bones in a Mississippi car crash in August. The Oscar-winning actor said he was still recovering from nerve damage in his left hand and wore a glove to control the swelling.

Denzel Washington and Clint Eastwood testified to their success working with Freeman.

"You're a great good luck charm," said Eastwood, a 2000 honoree. "Everything you touch is fine by me."

For Tharp's presentation, actress Lily Tomlin said Tharp sees dance everywhere she looks: "This is a woman who saw the Beach Boys and made a ballet."

Kennedy Center President Michael Kaiser, who worked with Tharp at the American Ballet Theater, said Tharp taught him "the difference between making a ballet and making art."



From left, Kennedy Center Honors producer George Stevens, Jr., Kennedy Center President Michael M. Kiaser, Kennedy Center Honoree, Roger Daltrey, Barbara Streisand, Morgan Freeman, Pete Townshend, George Jones, Twyla Tharp, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Kennedy Center Chairman Stephen A. Schwarzman pose for a group photo after the State Department Dinner for the Kennedy Center Honors gala Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008 at the State Department in Washington.

feel every word, that's something that artists in my day and age don't really pay attention to."

Earlier, another set of stars paid tribute to The Who in front of a neon-lit

pulled away to reveal a choir of 150 New York policemen and firefighters singing the "teenage wasteland" chorus with Thomas under an American flag. They were thanking The Who for being

year-old said "I'm in a daze" about being an honoree.

First lady Laura Bush took the stage to salute Jones, saying "there's no getting tired of a singer like him." Jones is

# Actress and drama teacher Nina Foch dies at 84

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Nina Foch, the Dutch-born actress who often played cool, calculating women in films, theater and television and was a respected coach of aspiring actors and directors, has died. She was 84.

Foch died Friday at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center of complications from the blood disorder myelodysplasia, her son, Dr. Dirk De Brito, told the Los Angeles Times. She became ill last week while teaching at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts.

Foch had taught at the school for 40 years. In her youth, she was a concert pianist and painter before taking up acting studies at the American Academy

of Dramatic Arts in New York City.

After appearing in summer theater productions and touring companies, she moved to Hollywood and signed a contract with Columbia Pictures, where she made her movie debut in 1943's "Wagon Wheels West."

Although she never achieved star status, Foch became a distinguished supporting player, often as "the other woman" or figures of wealth and connivance. She was nominated for an Academy Award for supporting actress for "Executive Suite" in 1955.

Other film credits included "The Ten Commandments," "Spartacus," "Rich and Famous" and "Sliver."

On Broadway, she performed in

"Tonight at 8:30," "A Second String," "Twelfth Night" and "King Lear," and on television she appeared in "Murder, She Wrote," "The Outer Limits," "Hawaii 5-0," "L.A. Law" and "Just Shoot Me." She appeared last year in an episode of "The Closer."

Foch was born on April 20, 1924, in Leyden, Netherlands, as Nina Consuelo Maud Foch. She was the daughter of conductor-composer Dirk Foch, who moved the family to New York when she was a child. Her mother, Consuelo Flowerton, became a well-known actress in New York, and Nina followed her into the theater world.

Foch said in a 1992 interview that she wanted to diversify her career by direct-

ing. She worked as an assistant to producer John Houseman and with directors George Stevens, Ron Woodward, and Randal Kleiser, but she eventually gave up that ambition in favor of teaching.

"I love them and they love me," she once said of her students. "I have one son, but I really don't. I have hundreds of children."

Foch's son is from her second marriage, to Dennis Brite. She married and divorced three times.

In this May 1959 file photo, actress Nina Foch works on a needlepoint seat cover between scenes while guest starring in the "Rawhide" episode of "Incident of the Judas Trap".





# 'Christmases' repeats at No. 1 with \$18.2M take

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Movie crowds kept up their holiday spirit as Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn's comedy "Four Christmases" rang up \$18.2 million to lead the box office for a second-straight weekend.

The Warner Bros. flick raised its 12-day total to \$70.8 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Four Christmases" was set up perfectly. It's an evergreen subject for the holiday period," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box office tracker Media By Numbers. "This is a movie that can play and is playing from Thanksgiving through the end of the year."

Despite the economic downturn, Hollywood continued to outperform last year's holiday season, with revenues up for the fifth weekend in a row.



This photo released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Reese Witherspoon as Kate and Vince Vaughn as Brad as they discover the pitfalls of holding a baby in New Line Cinema's romantic comedy, "Four Christmases," distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures.

The top 12 movies took in \$77.5 million, a 6 percent increase from the same weekend in 2007, when "The Golden Compass" opened at No. 1 with

\$25.8 million.

Revenues for the year are at \$8.7 billion, slightly ahead of the pace last year, when Hollywood ended up with record re-

ceipts of \$9.7 billion. However, that reflects higher ticket prices, because actual attendance is down 4 percent, according to Media By Numbers.

Only one new movie opened in full wide release, Lionsgate's action tale "Punisher: War Zone," which delivered a weak No. 8 debut with \$4 million. Based on Marvel Comics' "The Punisher," the movie stars Ray Stevenson in the title role as a vigilante hero going up against a crime boss.

In narrower release, Sony's music saga "Cadillac Records" opened solidly with \$3.5 million to come in at No. 9. The film features Adrien Brody, Beyonce Knowles, Jeffrey Wright, Cedric the Entertainer and Mos Def in the story of legendary blues label Chess Records.

Ron Howard's drama "Frost/Nixon" had a huge debut in lim-

1. "Four Christmases," \$18.2 million.
2. "Twilight," \$13.2 million.
3. "Bolt," \$9.7 million.
4. "Australia," \$7 million.
5. "Quantum of Solace," \$6.6 million.
6. "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa," \$5.1 million.
7. "Transporter 3," \$4.5 million.
8. "Punisher: War Zone," \$4 million.
9. "Cadillac Records," \$3.5 million.
10. "Role Models," \$2.6 million.

ited release, taking in \$180,147 in just three theaters, averaging a whopping \$60,049 a cinema. That compares to a \$5,451 average in 3,335 theaters for "Four Christmases."

A likely contender for a best-picture nomination at the Academy Awards, the Universal Pictures film stars Frank Langella as former President Richard Nixon and Michael Sheen as TV personality David Frost in the story of their momentous

1977 interviews.

"Frost/Nixon" expands to more theaters over the next two weeks.

Sony's James Bond sequel "Quantum of Solace" took in \$6.6 million to raise its domestic total to \$151.5 million. The film topped the \$500 million mark worldwide.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

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### My Only U

Friday 4:20 7:05 9:35  
 Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 9:35  
 Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:05

**Vhong Navarro, Toni Gonzaga**  
 Comedy, Romance • Rated PG 13

### Synopsis

Bong, a tenement manager, who has always liked his friend Winona but never summoned the courage to tell her of his feelings. He has no idea that Winona is also interested in him romantically. One day, in the tenement he is managing, he receives final notes from their late neighborhood doctor's assistant: one for him, one for Winona. When he checked his, he found out he was given a clean bill of health. He was worried for Winona who belongs to a family whose women all die before the age of 25.



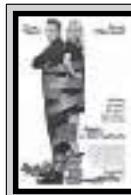
### Punisher War Zone

Friday 4:10 7:25 9:40  
 Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:25 9:40  
 Sunday 1:20 4:10 7:25  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:25

**Ray Stevenson, Dominic West**  
 Action, Adventure • Rated PG

### Synopsis

Waging his one-man war on the world of organized crime, ruthless vigilante-hero, Frank Castle sets his sights on overzealous mob boss, Billy Russo. After Russo is left horribly disfigured by Castle, he sets out for vengeance under his new alias: Jigsaw. With the "Punisher Task Force" hot on his trail and FBI unable to take Jigsaw in, Frank must stand up to the formidable army that Jigsaw has recruited before more of his evil deeds go unpunished.



### Four Christmases

Friday 4:05 7:10 9:45  
 Saturday 1:15 4:05 7:10 9:45  
 Sunday 1:15 4:05 7:10  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:10

**Nince Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon**  
 Comedy, Family, Holiday • Rated PG 13

### Synopsis

No one enjoys the holidays more than Brad and Kate. Every December 25th, this happily unmarried, upscale San Francisco couple embark on a holiday tradition they have shared every year since they met—ditching their crazy families for a relaxing, fun-filled vacation in some sunny exotic locale. There, sipping margaritas by the pool, they toast the season, knowing they have once again avoided the chaos and emotional fallout of their four respective households: divorced parents, squabbling siblings, out-of-control kids and all the simmering resentments and awkward moments that are the hallmarks of every family Christmas.



### Australia

Friday 4:00 7:00 10:00  
 Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00  
 Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:00

**Nicole Kidman, Hugh Jackman**  
 War, Romance • Rated PG 13



### Transporter 3

Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55  
 Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55  
 Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:15

**Jason Statham, Robert Berland**  
 Action, Crime, Sequel • Rated PG 13



### Twilight

Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50  
 Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50  
 Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:20

**Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson**  
 Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13



### Bolt

Friday 4:15 7:30 9:30  
 Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30  
 Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30  
 Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:30

**John Travolta, Miley Cyrus**  
 Action, Animated • Rated PG

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## THREE WISE GUYS



THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post offers Three Wise Guys, advice on life and other stuff from the male perspective, perpetrated by Post staffers, from left, Justin Rude, Joe Heim and Dan Zak. It may not be professional advice, but their responses to reader questions serve up a deft handling of any conceivable topic.

## Women asking out men, bird bones, shirt pins

By JOE HEIM, JUSTIN RUDE and DAN ZAK

(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dear Wise Guys: The TWGs are clearly not romantic advisers, but what do men think about being asked out by women? I conducted a survey of men, women, different generations, different cultural backgrounds, different degrees of inebriation. It yielded a consensus. Wondering what you think (Dan especially).—Christine

**Joe:** Men are thrilled to be asked out by women whom they find physically, emotionally, intellectually and sense-of-humorly attractive.

**Justin:** Mostly just physically attractive, though.

**Joe:** Probably true. Christine especially wants to hear from you, Dan.

**Dan:** Just think: If women had not had the generosity of spirit to ask out Joe and Justin, they wouldn't be happily married today. So do your part to reform hapless bachelors. As a bachelor who is hapFUL, I can say I love being asked out, though my heart already belongs to a woman named Liza.

Hey, Wise Guys: I've read that birds can fly because their bones are hollow, but does that mean they have no bone marrow? And if they don't, how do they produce blood cells?—Courtney

**Joe:** Interesting question, Courtney, and one

that I hear quite often. It's a common misconception that birds' bones are hollow. They're not hollow in the way that drinking straws are hollow. But birds do have enough space in their bones that their total plumage weighs two to three times what their skeleton weighs. Still, all birds have bone marrow, and that's where their blood cells are formed.

**Dan:** Don't pretend you knew the answer to that question.

**Joe:** I did.

**Dan:** Phony.

**Joe:** OK, fine. Some or all of my answer may have been provided by Laura Erickson, science editor at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y. That better?

**Justin:** We actually have a hotline to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I think that's the third avian query the folks there have helped us answer.

**Joe:** Why do we get so many bird questions?

**Justin:** Because you're a birdbrain.

Dear Dan, Joe, Justin: Why do men's dress shirts come with so much packaging? It takes over five minutes to remove all the pins, plastic inserts and cardboard. Then you have to take the shirt to the cleaners so they can steam out the creases. Why not just put it on a hanger?—Cheryl

**Joe:** You can thank the pin lobby for sticking it to shirt buyers. The North American Pinmakers Association has funneled tons of cash into congressional coffers to ensure laws that require 40 pins per dress shirt.

**Justin:** The International Hanger Association doesn't have nearly the same clout.

**Dan:** Sorry, Cheryl. Joe and Justin are practicing for the upcoming convention of the Idiots of America Association. I called shirtmaker Van Heusen to ask about the packaging. A customer service rep said the pins and inserts keep the shirts crisp during transport. Without the packaging, the shirt would be flattened or crumpled, which is arguably worse than geometric creasing. Either way, at least the collar is ramrod straight.

**Joe:** Why do we get so many pin questions?

**Dan:** Because you're a pinhead.

This week's motto: Some of What We Know Is Right (submitted by Bob Wagner, of Washington)

Have a question only the Three Wise Guys can answer? Send it to [wiseguys@washpost.com](mailto:wiseguys@washpost.com) and await their words of wise-dom.



# Miss France wants to advertise French diversity

**PARIS (AP)**—The new Miss France, born to an African-American mother and white French father, said Sunday she wants to advertise her country's diversity on the world stage.

Chloe Mortaud is not the first nonwhite winner of the beauty pageant, but she is joining a growing chorus of French public figures breaking traditions by speaking openly about race.

"I want to go to people and explain to them that fear of the other is unfounded," she told The Associated Press the day after being crowned. "I want to incarnate ... today's French diversity" at international beauty pageants.

France has championed a colorblind standard that sees all citizens as just French, regardless of ethnic origins—an ideal meant to make everyone feel equal. But it has failed to snuff out racism, particularly against immigrants from former French colonies in Africa. Discrimination in part fed riots in 2005 by largely minority youth in French housing projects.

Days after Barack Obama's election last month, leading French figures published a man-



ifesto urging affirmative action-like policies to expand opportunities for millions of blacks, Arabs and other minorities. First lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy said she hoped the "Obama effect" would reshape France's political and social elite.

Mortaud, a dual French-American citizen, said her mother was born in Mississippi but grew up in California, and her father's heritage is ethnic French "as far back as we could trace the family tree."

Mortaud said she and her brother were the only children of mixed ethnic background in the small town where they grew up in the French Pyrenees, where she said "everyone knows each other and respects each other."

Mortaud, 19, is a student in international business in the southern city of Toulouse, and speaks Chinese.

Chloe Mortaud, 18, of Midi Pyrenees throws a kiss after being crowned Miss France 2009 in Le Puy du Fou western France, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008.

AP

## Del Toro admires 'Che' thinking, but not violence

**HAVANA (AP)**—Actor Benicio del Toro says he admires Ernesto Guevara but the revolutionary icon he plays in the recent film biography "Che" would not need to resort to armed struggle if he were alive today.

Del Toro told a news conference Sunday at the Latin American Film Festival in Havana that he respects the Argentine-born Guevara as a "man of consequence," but personally opposes armed struggle.

He said revolutionaries can use elections and other nonviolent methods to promote change in an era when a black man can be elected president of the United States. Del Toro said Guevara would be "a different Che" today.

## Jamie Foxx: The Obamas need a pitbull

**NEW YORK (AP)**—As the quest for the First Dog continues, Academy Award-winner Jamie Foxx thinks he's come up with the perfect solution for the President-elect and his family.

"A pitbull," the entertainer says.

Jokes Foxx: "(I'm) trying to pick out Barack Obama's Christmas puppy right now, so we're working hard on that. I think I'm going to get him a pitbull, we just got to keep it street."

Foxx made the comments after performing at the annual Rockefeller Center Christmas tree lighting in New York last week.

He says: "I'm just celebrating Barack Obama (and) celebrating the new president," he said.

## Discovery's Bear Grylls injured in Antarctica

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Discovery Channel says Bear Grylls, rugged adventurer and star of its popular "Man vs. Wild" series, has been injured during an expedition in Antarctica.

A fall resulted in a shoulder injury to Grylls, who is en route back home to Britain for medical treatment and assessment of the injury's severity, according to Discovery.

He was not filming for Discovery, but instead was taking part in an independent expedition.

The 34-year-old Grylls has hosted "Man vs. Wild," on which he strands himself in remote locations to demonstrate survival techniques, since November 2006.

The former British Special Forces member recently published "Man vs. Wild: Survival Techniques for the Most Dangerous Places on Earth."

Andrews plans to fly to Vienna on Friday for the start of production. She has not been there since the early 1960s, when she visited the city while "The Sound of Music" was in production in Salzburg and other parts of Austria. The picture won an Academy Award for best picture, and Andrews was nominated for best actress for her portrayal of Maria von Trapp.

She thinks that, because of the movie, many people identify her with Austria.

"Certainly for me it has wonderful memories," she said. "It seemed to make a great deal sense that I accept the baton being passed from Mr. Cronkite."

Andrews, a fan of the music of Ravel, Prokofiev, Mozart, Brahms and the Strauss family, has never been to the Musikverein, the

138-year-old hall where the concert takes place. "As much as I will be a hostess, I will also be a tourist," she said. "I just think it's a lovely tradition. It's something that makes everybody feel good. The great Strauss music is so enjoyable, it all seems to fit in with the happiness of the new year."

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AP

In this Oct. 6, 2008 file photo, Lifetime Achievement Award honoree Dame Julie Andrews attends the 2008 National Arts Awards presented by Americans For The Arts in New York.

## Andrews to succeed Cronkite on PBS

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Julie Andrews is going from "The Sound of Music" to hosting one of music's biggest annual events.

The 73-year-old actress is succeeding Walter Cronkite as anchor of the Vienna Philharmonic's annual New Year's Day concert on PBS. Cronkite had been the narrator of the "Great Performances" telecast in the United States for the past 24 years.

"He is passing the baton this year and staying home with his family, and they asked me if I would do this special 25th anniversary program," Andrews said Wednesday during a telephone interview from Los Angeles. The New Year's concert in Vienna—mostly waltzes, polkas and marches from the Strauss family—has an estimated worldwide TV audience exceeding 1 billion. Daniel Barenboim will conduct for the first time in 2009, and the concert is to be released on DVD by Decca Classics.

Andrews wasn't sure whether she will become a permanent replacement for the 92-year-old Cronkite, the retired CBS anchorman.

"I'm sure the format is pretty much the same," she said. "It's like a wonderful postcard tribute

## Birth family reunion ends happily for surprise sister

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**  
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

**DEAR ABBY:** I hope "Mother With a Secret" (Sept. 3) will speak to her children about the half-brother they don't know about.

I was given up for adoption at birth and was raised by a wonderful mom and dad. After my oldest son was born, I wanted more information about my birth parents' history. My parents understood and helped me obtain the information. It has now been 26 years since I reunited with my birth mother and six half-siblings.

Although my birth mother had not told anyone about me before I contacted her, by the time I met her in person, she had told all her children about me. The sky didn't fall, and the earth didn't crumble. Instead, we became friends, sisters and brothers—all of whom I love dearly.

As it turned out, I inherited a disease that both my biological parents have. I found out only because I asked to be tested after they told me. Because I was diagnosed early, I will be fine. Some secrets should not be kept.

LUCKY DAUGHTER

**DEAR LUCKY:** I agree. I have always advocated for an adopted child's right to know if he or she has a genetic predisposition to any illnesses.

While you were "lucky," readers' opinions on the subject were mixed. Read on:

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** Except for some medical need to know, have you considered that the adopted child may not have been told about the adoption, or that he might not WANT to be found? As an adoptee, I have been approached by strangers claiming kinship. I know enough about my irresponsible birth parents to not want to know any of their kin, no matter how "respectable" they may seem. Not all of us want to be found.

'OLD CURMUDGEON' IN OREGON

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** While I was moving my ill mother from her home to live with me in another state, she told me that Dad was not my birth father. I was stunned. I asked a lot of questions, and thought I had learned everything I needed to know.

After she passed away, I did some checking on my own and learned that not only did my birth father live a half-hour from where I grew up, but that I had a half-brother and four half-sisters. No one knew about me. I also found out that I am only five months older than one of his daughters. The whole situation caused me a lot of grief and disappointment the entire family, especially my father's wife, who is still living.

There are a lot more questions that I have now, but I will never get the answers because Mom is gone. I urge "Mother With a Secret" to tell her kids now—while they can hear the whole story straight from her lips.

UNRESOLVED IN ALABAMA

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I liked your advice to "Mother," but I feel strongly she should tell her children now. They will have questions for sure, some of which may not be answered in a letter to be opened after her death.

Unfortunately, my mom didn't leave us a letter to read after she was gone. The adopted child found us, and we all have questions that will go unanswered because the adoption happened almost 35 years ago, and Mom passed away three years ago. I wish she was still here to answer the many questions I have, as well as those of my half-sister who has recently become part of the family.

WISH MOTHER HADN'T KEPT A SECRET

■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** Adoption should be a celebration, not a secret. The reality is that adoption is a miracle that blesses the lives of all who are involved.

I commend "Mother" for the decision she made many years ago. I pray her son was raised knowing the truth about his birth, and that if she decides to share her "secret" with her other two children, she will be able to find a sense of healing.

ADOPTIVE MOTHER OF TWO

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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**235- NEWS**



# Titans clinch first AFC South title since 2002



**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (AP)—The Tennessee Titans aren't about to be distracted by a power outage in their locker room or a struggling opponent.

Not now. Not as a division champion.

Kerry Collins threw two touchdowns, and Chris Johnson ran for 136 yards and a score as the Titans routed the Cleveland Browns 28-9 Sunday to grab the AFC South title for the first time since 2002 in what they hope is the first of many goals reached this season.

"Obviously, we're all pleased and happy we won the division," Collins said. "We know there's a lot of things left we want to accomplish. Today was a good first step."

The Titans have won 15 of their last 16 games, and are the first team to secure a postseason berth this year. They maintained at least a two-game lead with three to play for home-field advantage in the AFC playoffs and clinched a first-round bye when San Francisco beat the New York Jets 24-14 later Sunday.

A subdued celebration featured players dumping a cooler of water over coach Jeff Fisher for the Titans' second consecutive playoff berth, secured with the franchise's best record through 13 games, 12-1. Fisher credited his Titans' 10-0 start with helping them wrest the division away from the Indianapolis Colts.

"It's a rewarding feeling. Our goal when we left the playoff game in San Diego, the day we came back, was to have a home playoff game this year. That was our first goal, first and foremost. We've now guaranteed that. We'll move onto the next step hopefully," Fisher said.

The Titans were a bit like a videoboard that didn't work thanks to a blown transformer that knocked out all but four emergency lights in their locker room. They turned it over three times, with LenDale White losing his first fumble this season, and they had a season-high 13 penalties for 131 yards.

Defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth said he didn't even notice the power even after dressing in near darkness.

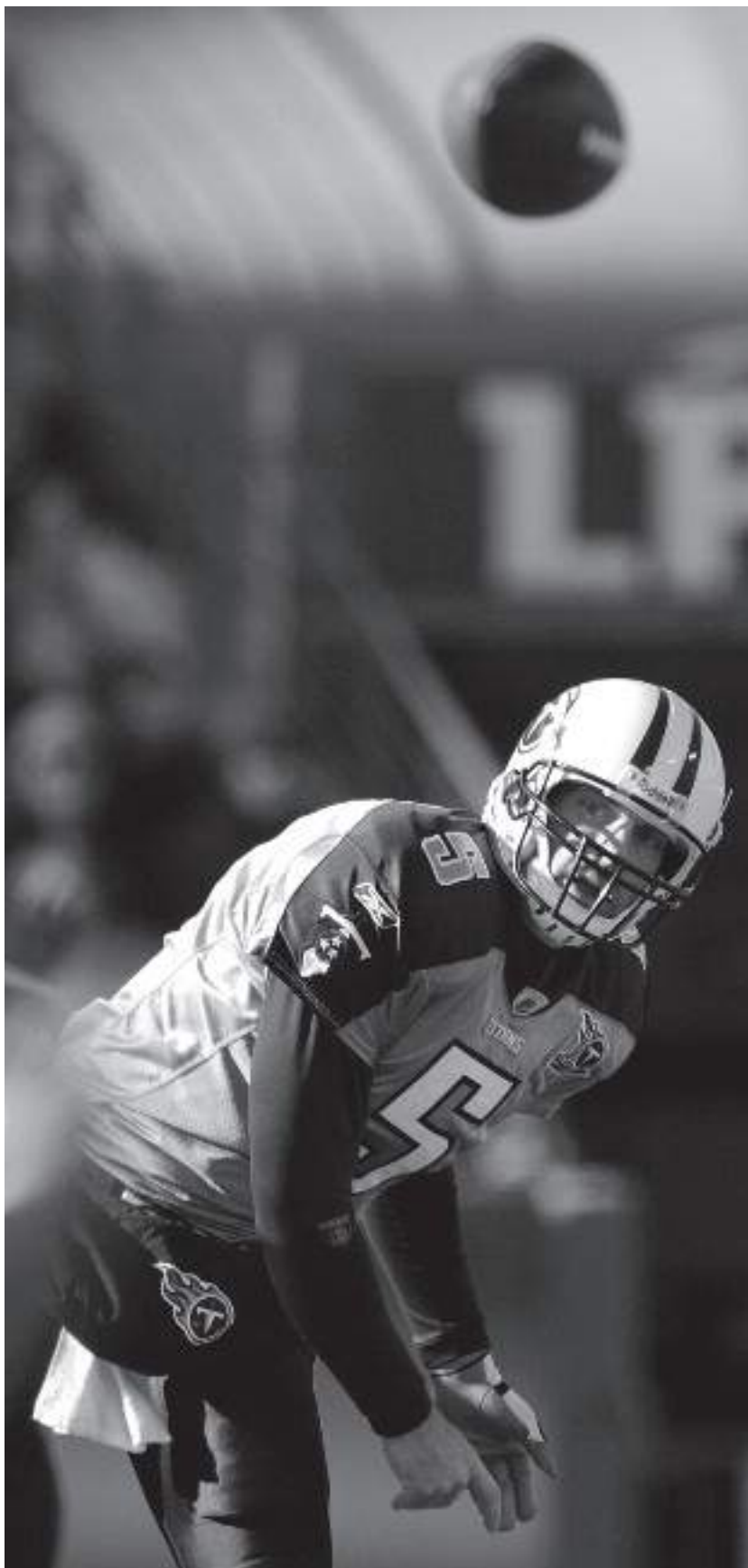
"I thought they were trying to get the mood right," he said.

Cleveland (4-9) lost its third straight and fifth in six games, with the Browns starting a third different quarterback in as many games. It was Ken Dorsey's first start since Nov. 27, 2005, when he was with the 49ers, and he didn't get much help from an injury-decimated team whose top receiver, tight end Kellen Winslow, was out with a sprained ankle.

Tennessee didn't make nearly enough mistakes to help the Browns, who haven't scored an offensive touchdown in three straight games and couldn't add to the 6-0 lead Phil Dawson gave them after the first quarter. Coach Romeo Crennel, whose job status grows shakier with each loss, defended his team for still fighting.

"The Titans are a very good football team, and I think they showed why they are today. We came down here and had some turnovers and had opportunities to try and get a little bit done. We weren't able to get enough done," Crennel said.

The Titans outgained Cleveland 390-178, intercepted Dorsey once and



Tennessee Titans quarterback Kerry Collins (5) passes against the Cleveland Browns in the second quarter of an NFL football game in Nashville, Tenn., Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008. AP

sacked him another time. White just missed joining Johnson with a 100-yard rushing game for a second straight week when he was stopped for a 1-yard loss on fourth-and-1. He finished with 99 yards on 24 carries.

Tennessee took the lead for good within the opening minute of the second quarter as Collins found Ahmard Hall on fourth-and-1 with a short pass the fullback took up the left sideline for a 28-yard TD and a 7-6 lead.

Collins added a 9-yard TD pass to Justin Gage in the third quarter.

Dorsey started because the Browns have lost both Brady Quinn and Derek Anderson. Dorsey hadn't completed a pass in three years in an NFL game, and he started well enough, connecting with Braylon Edwards on the first two attempts. He wound up completing 22-of-43 as the Titans pressured him early and hit him often.

The Browns also tried running Joshua Cribbs from the quarterback spot. He finally got to throw in the fourth period, trailing 28-9, and Edwards just

missed getting a second foot down for what would have been their longest completion.

"We're not last year's team," Cribbs said. "We have a different football team. We have to play better football."

Tennessee finally got it together late in the first quarter in a 68-yard drive capped by the TD to Hall. Pinned at their 7, the Titans put together their longest scoring drive this season by moving 93 yards in 10 plays, with White running in from the 3 for his 14th TD this season for a 14-6 lead just before halftime.

During the drive, Johnson joined Hall of Famer Earl Campbell and Eddie George as the only rookies in franchise history to rush for 1,000 yards, and he topped that mark with a 15-yarder on only his ninth carry.

## Ravens 24, Redskins 10

At Baltimore, Ed Reed set up a touchdown with an interception and scored on a 22-yard fumble return to help Baltimore beat Washington for its seventh

win in eight games.

Baltimore (9-4) also enhanced its stature in the wild-card race and remained one game behind Pittsburgh in the AFC North. Baltimore hosts the Steelers next Sunday.

## Cardinals 34, Rams 10

At Glendale, Arizona, Kurt Warner threw for 279 yards, the defense scored twice and Arizona clinched its first division title in 33 years by beating the woeful St. Louis to claim the National Football Conference West.

The Cardinals, long the league's doormat franchise with just one winning season in the last 24 years, earned their first playoff berth since 1998 and first divisional title since they won the NFC East in 1975. As NFC West champions, they will host a playoff game for the first time since, as the Chicago Cardinals, they defeated Philadelphia to win the NFL title in 1947.

## Eagles 20, Giants 14

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Brian Westbrook ran 30 yards for a touchdown, caught another 40-yarder from Donovan McNabb, and Philadelphia's defense limited the New York Giants to 211 yards and end the Super Bowl champions' seven-game winning streak.

The Giants still clinched the NFC East when Dallas lost to Pittsburgh.

## Vikings 20, Lions 16

At Detroit, the Lions had chances to win, as they did in a two-point loss at Minnesota, but couldn't make enough plays, just as they have failed to throughout a miserable season.

At this point, Detroit is expected to finish the season as the first 0-16 team in league history, with games remaining at Indianapolis, against New Orleans and at Green Bay. The Lions are the fourth team to start 0-13 or worse since 1976, when Tampa Bay infamously finished 0-14 as an expansion team.

## Steelers 20, Cowboys 13

At Pittsburgh, Deshaea Townsend scored on a 25-yard interception return with 1:40 remaining as Pittsburgh scored its only two touchdowns 24 seconds apart to rally from a 10-point deficit.

Pittsburgh was stopped on fourth down at the Dallas 1 early in the fourth quarter while falling behind 13-3, but came back to tie it at 13 on Ben Roethlisberger's 6-yard pass to Heath Miller with 2:04 left. Roethlisberger found Nate Washington three times for 51 yards on a 67-yard drive after the Cowboys (8-5) twice stalled.

## Broncos 24, Chiefs 17

At Denver, Jay Cutler guided the Broncos on a tiebreaking 95-yard touchdown drive early in the fourth quarter and Denver's defense stuffed quarterback Tyler Thigpen on fourth-and-goal.

The Broncos (8-5) snapped a three-game skid at home and put themselves on the cusp of ending a three-year playoff drought. They lead second-place San Diego by three games in the mid-dling AFC West.

## Dolphins 16, Bills 3

At Toronto, Miami took advantage of an indifferent Bills "home" crowd, an inept Buffalo offense and the cozy indoors of the Rogers Centre to stay firmly in playoff contention. Chad Pennington completed 23 passes, including his final 11 attempts,

and hit Anthony Fasano for a 20-yard touchdown as the Dolphins (8-5) won for the sixth time in seven games.

## 49ers 24, Jets 14

At San Francisco, Shaun Hill passed for 285 yards and two touchdowns against the New York Jets' porous secondary, and San Francisco sent the AFC East-leading Jets to their second straight embarrassing loss.

Joe Nedney kicked a 32-yard tie-breaking field goal early in the fourth quarter and Bryant Johnson made a diving 3-yard TD catch with 6:05 left for the suddenly solid 49ers (5-8), who have won three of four.

## Patriots 24, Seahawks 21

At Seattle, Matt Cassel calmly stared down blitzes for completions with his team's playoff chances in the balance. Then Sammy Morris leaped into the end zone from 1 yard on fourth down with 2:44 remaining.

One week after flopping with four turnovers in a home loss to Pittsburgh that put New England on the outside rail of the AFC playoff race, Cassel was 26-of-44 for 268 yards and a touchdown, with no turnovers.

## Saints 29, Falcons 25

At New Orleans, Pierre Thomas rushed for 102 yards and scored two touchdowns, and New Orleans kept alive its slim playoff hopes with a win over Atlanta.

Thomas scored his first touchdown on a 7-yard screen early in the fourth quarter. He also scored the winning touchdown on a 5-yard toss sweep, a score he set up with his 88-yard kick-off return after Matt Ryan's 12-yard scramble had given the Falcons a 25-22 lead.

## Bears 23, Jaguars 10

At Chicago, Danieal Manning set the tone for a strong defensive effort with an early interception, and Desmond Clark and Greg Olsen caught touchdown passes.

Robbie Gould kicked three field goals and the Bears (7-6) rebounded from a 34-14 loss at Minnesota last week to remain a game behind the Vikings in the NFC North and needing help to make the playoffs. They got some from the Jaguars (4-9), who have dropped four in a row and six of seven.

## Colts 35, Bengals 3

At Indianapolis, Peyton Manning threw for three touchdowns, Dominic Rhodes ran for one and cornerback Kelvin Hayden's interception return produced another.

It was a stark contrast from the past month, when Indy became just the third team in league history to win five consecutive games by six points or fewer. No. 6 had a completely different look.

## Texans 24, Packers 21

At Green Bay, Wisconsin, quarterback Matt Schaub returned from a knee injury to set up Kris Brown's 40-yard field goal on the final play of the game as Houston beat Green Bay.

The Texans won despite committing four turnovers, perhaps the byproduct of a warm-weather team playing in temperatures that hovered around 3 degrees at kickoff. Still, the Texans (6-7) managed their second victory in six days after beating Jacksonville on Monday night.



# Blake's late 3 lifts Blazers past Raptors



**TORONTO (AP)**—LaMarcus Aldridge scored 20 points, Steve Blake had 19 that included a 3-pointer with 8 seconds left, and the Portland Trail Blazers spoiled Toronto coach Jay Triano's home debut with a 98-97 victory over the Raptors on Sunday.

Jermaine O'Neal scored a season-high 24 points along with six blocked shots, while Chris Bosh added 19, but it wasn't enough to give Triano his first win as the Raptors lost their fourth straight game.

A basket by Brandon Roy pulled the Blazers even at 95-95 with 49 seconds left, but Bosh stepped back to sink a 14-foot jumper with 27 seconds to go.

Then Blake drained his 3 over Jose Calderon, and Bosh missed his final shot.

Calderon added 15 points and 13 assists for Toronto, while Joey Graham and Jason Kapono had 10 points apiece off the bench.

The Raptors led by as many as 16 points early in the second quarter, but the Blazers battled back to lead by 10 early in the fourth quarter.

The Raptors found another gear in front of an energetic crowd at the Air Canada Centre and a long jumper by Kapono capped a 17-2 Raptors' run that put them up by five points with 3:41 left on the clock.

The Raptors shot a 49 percent from the floor, but were outrebounded 48-31.

The 50-year-old Triano, a former long-time Canadian national team player and coach, became the NBA's first Canadian head coach on Wednesday when he was named Sam Mitchell's replacement on an interim basis that's expected to last the remainder of the season.

The native of Niagara Falls, Ontario, wants to get the Raptors running more, and the pace of the game, especially in the opening 12 minutes, was noticeably quicker.

Triano hollered "Go, go, go!" from the moment Calderon had the ball, and by the time the point guard sat down for a breather with a couple of minutes

to go in the first quarter he was dripping with sweat.

Mitchell was fired the morning after a horrible 39-point loss to Denver, less than 20 months after he earned NBA

coach of the year honors.

Triano did coach one game last season—a Raptors' victory over the New Jersey Nets—when Mitchell was away on a family matter, but the victory went

on Mitchell's record.

Triano shrugged off the significance of Sunday's game. While his sister Jody attended, he told his mother and father, who's recovering from an Oct. 29 stroke, not to make the trip.

"For us it's another game," Triano said before the game. "We prepared the same way as we did for the Jazz game (a 114-87 loss Friday in Triano's debut). It's going to take a little bit of time to get to where we want to get to, and (my parents will) see lots of games."

The Raptors sprinted out to an 11-point lead midway through the first quarter, holding the Blazers to just 20 percent shooting in that span. A dunk by Graham stretched their lead to 12 and Toronto went into the second quarter up 21-20. The Raptors took a 16-point lead less than two minutes into the second, but Portland outscored Toronto 28-14 to the end of the half and the Raptors were up 50-48 at the break.

Blake drained a 3 early in the third quarter to give the Blazers their first lead since the beginning of the game. Portland stretched its lead to 10 points with five minutes left in the quarter, but Toronto used a 12-2 run to tie the game and trailed Portland 78-75 at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

## Celtics 122, Pacers 117, OT

At Indianapolis, Ray Allen scored a season-high 35 points to lead Boston past Indiana and push the Celtic's winning streak to 12 straight—their longest since 1986.

Kevin Garnett had 17 points, 20 rebounds and five steals, Paul Pierce had 17 points and eight rebounds and Eddie House had 15 points for Boston (20-2).

Marquis Daniels led Indiana with a season-high 26 points.



Portland Trail Blazers' Greg Oden, left, looks to shoot as Toronto Raptors' Andrea Bargnani, of Italy, defends during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Portland Trail Blazers in Toronto on Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008.

## Florida, Oklahoma await pairing for national title

By **EDDIE PELLIS**  
AP NATIONAL WRITER



That logjam at the top of the rankings wasn't so hard to figure out. Nobody dominated the last two months of college football like Oklahoma and Florida. Every poll and pretty much everyone outside of Texas agreed on that.

No surprise, then, that the Gators and Sooners were the easy picks despite having one loss each. This pair of power programs with Heisman-worthy quarterbacks and 12-1 records will meet Jan. 8 in Miami for the BCS national championship.

Oklahoma was ranked first and Florida second in the final BCS standings released Sunday. They were flip-flopped in the Associated Press poll, which is not used in determining the BCS, but was used by BCS chairman John Swofford as another way of validating the matchup.

"One of the interesting aspects of where we are, looking at the standings, is that Florida and Oklahoma are one or

two in the Harris poll, coaches' poll and even the AP poll, which is not used in the BCS standings," Swofford said.

"You have a consistency there with the human polls on those same two teams," he said.

Including Texas, Southern California, Texas Tech, Penn State and Alabama, there were seven teams with one loss in the BCS' final top 10. Two more—Utah and Boise State—finished undefeated.

But only two had resumes like Florida and Oklahoma.

Led by Tim Tebow, the Gators rebounded from their only loss to dominate the next nine games, scoring more than 49 points a game in wins that culminated with a 31-20 victory over Alabama on Saturday for the SEC title.

Sam Bradford was the same kind of force for Oklahoma. The Sooners lost 45-35 to Texas in October, but still ended up with an NCAA-record 702 points this season. They ended the season by becoming the first team since 1919 to score 60-plus in five straight games.

"We beat five ranked teams and three ranked teams as the last three games of the year," Sooners coach Bob Stoops

said. "That decided it."

This will mark the first-ever meeting between these two power programs, each seeking their second title of the 2000s.

Florida was an up-and-coming power and Oklahoma was a declining one back in 1998, when Stoops decided to leave his post as Gators defensive coordinator and take his first head-coaching job with the Sooners.

In 2000, he helped Oklahoma to its seventh national title. Still, when Steve Spurrier left Florida a year later, many Gators thought Stoops' return was only a matter of logistics.

Who wouldn't take the sun and fun of Florida over the grit and dust of Norman, right?

Stoops declined, though, saying he had everything a coach could ever ask for at Oklahoma—nice campus, good boosters, fantastic resources and, yes, even more tradition than they had at Florida.

"I had great memories of my time there and great experiences," Stoops said. "But I had also been making my own here at Oklahoma. I felt so strongly about what we were doing and positive about what we were doing, I wanted to see it through."

## Rodriguez meets with Mets



**LAS VEGAS (AP)**—Francisco Rodriguez met with the New

York Mets on the eve of the winter meetings, and pitchers Darren Oliver and David Weathers took themselves off the free-agent market by accepting arbitration offers from their former clubs before Sunday night's deadline.

Coming off a record-setting season for the Los Angeles Angels, Rodriguez came to Las Vegas and got together with New York general manager Omar Minaya. The Mets are looking for a closer following elbow surgery on Billy Wagner, who likely will miss all of next season.

K-Rod set a major league record with 62 saves last season, and his agent has talked about seeking a five-year deal worth about \$65 million. But it is questionable whether Rodriguez will receive a contract of that length and average salary, especially given baseball's worries about the national recession.

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman had planned to meet with left-hander CC Sabathia, the top available free-agent starter, during the weekend.

Danny Granger scored 20 points, but shot just 7-of-22 from the field.

Indiana is one of two teams to beat Boston this season, and the Pacers nearly pulled it off again by shooting 50 percent from the field against the league's top defensive team. It was the most points the Celtics have allowed this season.

## Knicks 104, Pistons 92

At New York, Chris Duhon had 25 points and nine assists, Quentin Richardson scored 23, and New York blew most of a 29-point lead before holding on to snap a three-game losing streak.

Wilson Chandler and Al Harrington hit key 3-pointers for the Knicks, who dropped the Pistons to 0-5 on Sundays.

Harrington finished with 18 points and Chandler had 17 for the Knicks, who avoided their first four-game skid of the season. David Lee had 12 points and 19 rebounds as all but nine points came from New York's starters.

Tayshaun Prince had 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Pistons, who fell to 7-8 since Allen Iverson's debut with the team. Iverson and Arron Afflalo each finished with 17 points for the Pistons, who are 11-3 on the other days of the week.

## Lakers 105, Bucks 92

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant had 20 points and a season-high eight assists, Derek Fisher added 19 points and the Los Angeles Lakers equaled the best 19-game start in franchise history.

The Lakers also started the 1985-86 season 17-2. This was the sixth time the team has won 17 of its first 20 games, including the championship seasons of 1971-72 and 2001-02.

All the Lakers' starters scored in double digits, something none of the Bucks' starters did.

Bryant shot 6-for-13, sitting out the final 4 minutes of the third quarter after getting treated for a cut just above his left wrist. He started the fourth and was removed with 7:41 to play and the Lakers up by 19.

Before the meetings begin Monday, one of baseball's offseason deadlines passed. Twenty-four free agents were offered arbitration by their former teams on Dec. 1, and Oliver (Angels) and Weathers (Cincinnati Reds) were the only two to accept. They are considered signed players and will have their salaries determined by arbitration panels in February unless they reach agreements with their teams before then.

Rodriguez rejected the Angels' offer, as did first baseman Mark Teixeira, who may get the most guaranteed years among this year's free-agent class.

Among others who rejected offers were Sabathia and right-hander Ben Sheets (Milwaukee); outfielder Manny Ramirez and right-hander Derek Lowe (Los Angeles Dodgers); right-hander A.J. Burnett (Toronto); catcher Jason Varitek and right-hander Paul Byrd (Boston); left-hander Oliver Perez (Mets); and left-hander Brian Fuentes (Colorado).

By offering arbitration, a team ensures it will receive one or two draft picks as compensation if a former player who became a free agent signs with a new club.



# Hatton, Mayweather next for Pacquiao?



**LAS VEGAS**—How much bigger can a challenge get for Manny Pacquiao? Well, think a football stadium, 100,000 chanting fans and a beer-guzzling bloke who loves brawling as much as the Pacman does.

After possibly sending Oscar De La Hoya to retirement, Team Pacquiao is now training its sights on British sensation Ricky Hatton, the Hitman from Manchester City who is currently the top junior welterweight—the division the 29-year-old southpaw wants his fifth title to come from.

And it is that fight, plus one against Floyd Mayweather Jr., that trainer Freddie Roach hopes will seal the Pacman’s boxing legacy.

“That’s an interesting fight because you’ve got action fighters,” Roach said. “Hatton is the best fight out there for us right now, money-wise, style-wise. He’s a hard guy. He likes to fight. It would be a very interesting fight. I think the world would love to see that and Manny has been always wants to give the world what they want.”

During Friday’s weigh-in, Hatton spoke to the audience and said he would be very interested in fighting the winner at Wembley Stadium, the famous London football field that can seat 100,000 fans.

And Pacquiao said he is willing to head into the heart of Hatton’s homeland for the fight.

“I’m willing to accept his invitation,” said Pacquiao, who added that he doesn’t mind Hatton’s major edge in fan support because it will only encourage him to fight harder.

After Saturday’s fight, though, Pacquiao became non-committal.

“My job is to prepare as hard as I can for a fight,” said the Gen. Santos City native. “It’s the job of my promoter to negotiate my next opponent.”



WBC lightweight champion Manny Pacquiao celebrates his victory over Oscar De La Hoya shortly after their welterweight boxing match in Las Vegas, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2008.

Despite that statement, though, it is clear that Hatton is next in line for Pacquiao, unless Mayweather steps in and demands a battle for the mythical pound-for-pound crown. *(PDI)*

## ALL-STARS

From Page 28

Dragon Shuttlers, 4-1, on Day 6 of the tournament Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

With the win, the All-Stars improved to a 24-11 record tying the Smash Killers for the No. 1 spot.

The Smash Killers also won on Day 6, but got only three points against the Net Fighters making the battle for the championship an exciting race between the former and the All-Stars.

Delivering the needed victories for

the All-Stars were the pairs of Edwin Montoya and Gerry Balarao, Christy Villaflor/Ruby Gozon, Villaflor/Lea Estinopo, and Balarao/Jojo Savellano.

Hapi Gabriel and Gigi Zapanta gave the Shuttlers their lone win in the match topping Montoya and Estinopo in straight sets in the mixed doubles AB, 21-15, 21-15.

Montoya later teamed up with Balarao in the men’s doubles AB and downed Gabriel and Noli Santos, 21-9, 21-11.

Villaflor joined forces with Gozon in the women’s doubles BC to thwart Merlie Savellano, 21-10, 21-18. In the women’s doubles BB, Villaflor and Es-

tinopa defeated Malou Mendoza and Zapanta, 21-13, 21-16.

Balarao and Jojo Savellano gave the All-Stars their fourth win after outlasting Santos and Jun Pineda, 21-18, 21-14.

In other results, the Bad Masters outclassed the Blue Powers, 3-2, to share the No. 3 spot with the Red Dragon Shuttlers.

The Gray Hawks prevailed over D’Bombers, 4-1, to improve to a 20-15 record and claim solo second place.

The Blue Powers and the Net Fighters are tied with identical 15-20 slates, while D’Bombers are at the bottom of the team standings with a 9-26 mark.

## RAYS

From Page 28

windup up in the last one minute of that canto to regain control of the match.

The Knights failed to sustain their momentum in the closing minutes of the third quarter, as they were rattled by the Rays’ pressured defense.

Southern harassed Mt. Carmel’s inbound passer and recipient forcing several errors and converting these miscues into points.

The Rays continued playing trapping

defense in the fourth period despite a big lead making life miserable for the Knights, who were scoreless in the first five minutes of that quarter.

The Knight in several occasions could not cross the mid court line against the Rays’ tough defense, and when the former did, they took hurried shots and missed most of them.

Midway in the fourth period, Southern’s lead ballooned to 38, 78-46.

The Knights were held to eight points in the fourth period drilling most of them when the Rays’ finally put their guards down in the last three

minutes of the match.

The Rays and the Ayuyus title showdown in the boys’ junior varsity division will be played on Friday at 4:30pm. Tomorrow, the Lady Rays and the Lady Ayuyus will collide for the girls’ tiara.

**SSHS 90** – Ecalnea 28, A. Palacios 21, Cadiang 7, Wesley 6, Villanueva 6, Ngeskebei 5, Salem 5, Sablan 4, Paek 4, Ferrer 4, Bicara 2, M. Palacios 2.

**MCS 46** – M. Kim 26, B. Baka 8, Han 7, Yoon 5.

**Scoring by quarters:** 17-7, 38-26, 51-38, 90-46.

## SWIMMERS

From Page 28

national School’s Kai Staal were named Student Female and Male Athletes of the Month during NMASA’s meeting Thursday night at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Marianas High School’s Marystar Welch and Rezne Wong were also recognized at the meeting gaining the Female and Male Athletes of the Month awards.

Tan swept the girls’ 9-and-under 50m backstroke, 50m breaststroke, 50m butterfly, and 50m freestyle swims. She set personal best times in all events.

Staal shattered two records in the boys’ 13 to 14 age group.

The 14-year-old swimmer timed in at 25.68 seconds in the 50m freestyle

of the 200m medley free relay. He anchored the SIS Geckos relay team composed of James Kim, Cooper Graf and Sarah Johnson. SIS clocked 2:00.75 to finish second behind Marianas High School (1:56.36).

Staal’s 25.68 seconds broke the 26.23 seconds set by Joshua Taitano in the boys’ 13-14 age group on Dec. 9, 1995.

His new mark also surpassed the Top 16 Motivational Time in the 2005-2008 U.S. Swimming Time Standards. In the boys’ 13 to 14 age group, the highest time standard (Four As) in the 50m freestyle is 26.79 seconds.

Staal posted his second record in the boys’ 13 to 14 100m freestyle, timing in at 57.46 seconds and shattering the 13-year-old record of Taitano (Aug. 16, 1995), who clocked 57.86 seconds.

Again, Staal’s new record in the 100m

freestyle exceeded the Top 16 standard time, which is 58.29 seconds. He is about three minutes away from the Top 10 standard time of 54.84 seconds.

Welch won first place in three events, namely the 100m breaststroke, 200m individual medley, and 200m freestyle relay swims. She set a new personal best time (3:79) in the 200m IM.

Wong swam in the 100m breaststroke event and broke two records, which he himself set.

The 17-year-old Wong finished the 100m breaststroke race in 1:10.62 seconds, a new CNMI National Record. The previous mark was 1:10.91, which Wong himself posted on May 30, 2008.

Wong’s time in last month’s meet was also a new mark in the boys’ 17 to 18 age group with the MHS swimmer eclipsing his own record (1:10.91).



## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA STANDINGS

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

##### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	20	2	.909	—
New Jersey	11	8	.579	7 1/2
New York	9	11	.450	10
Philadelphia	9	12	.429	10 1/2
Toronto	8	11	.421	10 1/2

##### Southeast Division

Orlando	15	5	.750	—
Atlanta	12	7	.632	2 1/2
Miami	11	9	.550	4
Charlotte	7	13	.350	8
Washington	3	15	.167	11

##### Central Division

Cleveland	17	3	.850	—
Detroit	11	8	.579	5 1/2
Chicago	9	11	.450	8
Milwaukee	9	13	.409	9
Indiana	7	13	.350	10

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### Southwest Division

Houston	13	7	.650	—
New Orleans	11	6	.647	1/2
Dallas	11	8	.579	1 1/2
San Antonio	11	8	.579	1 1/2
Memphis	5	15	.250	8

##### Northwest Division

Portland	15	7	.682	—
Denver	14	7	.667	1/2
Utah	13	9	.591	2
Minnesota	4	15	.211	9 1/2
Oklahoma City	2	19	.095	12 1/2

##### Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	17	2	.895	—
Phoenix	12	9	.571	6
Golden State	5	15	.250	12 1/2
Sacramento	5	16	.238	13
L.A. Clippers	4	16	.200	13 1/2

#### Yesterday's Games

New York 104, Detroit 92  
Portland 98, Toronto 97  
Boston 122, Indiana 117, OT  
L.A. Lakers 105, Milwaukee 92

### NFL STANDINGS

#### AMERICAN CONFERENCE

##### East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
N.Y. Jets	8	5	0	.615	354	292
New England	8	5	0	.615	301	276
Miami	8	5	0	.615	269	260
Buffalo	6	7	0	.462	279	275

##### South

x-Tennessee	12	1	0	.923	332	184
Indianapolis	9	4	0	.692	292	253
Houston	6	7	0	.462	306	331
Jacksonville	4	9	0	.308	251	293

##### North

Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	289	183
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	316	200
Cleveland	4	9	0	.308	222	275
Cincinnati	1	11	1	.115	154	345

##### West

Denver	8	5	0	.615	316	336
San Diego	5	8	0	.385	324	281
Oakland	3	10	0	.231	179	299
Kansas City	2	11	0	.154	233	364

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

##### East

x-N.Y. Giants	11	2	0	.846	366	226
Dallas	8	5	0	.615	312	280
Philadelphia	7	5	1	.577	339	263
Washington	7	6	0	.538	218	246

##### South

Tampa Bay	9	3	0	.750	280	200
Carolina	9	3	0	.750	285	231
Atlanta	8	5	0	.615	323	271
New Orleans	7	6	0	.538	366	326

##### North

Minnesota	8	5	0	.615	307	276
Chicago	7	6	0	.538	304	278
Green Bay	5	8	0	.385	355	319
Detroit	0	13	0	.000	219	413

##### West

x-Arizona	8	5	0	.615	372	323
San Francisco	5	8	0	.385	286	327
Seattle	2	11	0	.154	237	335
St. Louis	2	11	0	.154	169	394

#### x-clinched Division

#### Yesterday's Games

Minnesota 20, Detroit 16  
Tennessee 28, Cleveland 9  
Houston 24, Green Bay 21  
New Orleans 29, Atlanta 25  
Chicago 23, Jacksonville 10  
Philadelphia 20, N.Y. Giants 14  
Indianapolis 35, Cincinnati 3  
Miami 16, Buffalo 3  
New England 24, Seattle 21  
San Francisco 24, N.Y. Jets 14  
Denver 24, Kansas City 17  
Pittsburgh 20, Dallas 13  
Arizona 34, St. Louis 10  
Baltimore 24, Washington 10

By The Associated Press

### LOCAL SCORES

#### ROCBALL STANDINGS

Okies	4	0
Ghasias	3	1
Fanians	3	1
Evenflow	2	1
Soul Rebels	1	3
FSM Rebels	0	2
No-Mercy	0	2
Naturals	0	3

#### BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

##### Men's Division

DCCA	5	0
Freedom Air	5	0
Joeten Motors	5	1
CPA	3	0
Legislature	4	1
Beach Boys	4	1
No Zone	4	2
DLNR	4	2
Saipan Cell	3	3
Law & Order	2	3
POI	2	2
DEQ/CRM	2	3
P & S	2	3
PIC	1	3
PSS	2	4
CHC	1	4
CUC	1	5
Customs	0	2
Hopwood	0	6
Mayors	0	6

##### Women's Division

NMC	4	0
DCCA	3	1
Finance	2	3
CHC	1	3
CUC	1	4

#### NMBF STANDINGS

Smash Killers	24	11
All Stars	24	11
Gray Hawks	20	15
Dragon Shuttlers	16	19
Bad Masters	16	19
Net Fighters	15	20
Blue Powers	15	20
D'Bombers	9	26

Jesus Rabauliman.

Dandan Elementary School B thwarted Whispering Palms/Brilliant Star in the battle for third place.

The Top 4 teams received trophies during the awards ceremony.

The organizing Northern Mariana Islands Football Association also handed Fair Play plaques to GTC (girls) and SIS (boys) of the Northern Group and Southern’s San Vicente (girls) and Oleai (boys).

NMIFA president Jerry Tan, league coordinator Patty Coleman, and league commissioner Jonas Barcinas were present at the awards ceremony to recognize the top performers of the league.

The inaugural U12 league was participated in by 17 schools. Also on the list were Garapan Elementary School, Kagman Elementary School, Eucon, and Tanapag Elementary School of the Northern Group and Southern’s Dandan Elementary School A, Saipan Community School, and San Antonio Elementary School.

## WSR

From Page 28

Guillermo Corpuz, Melony David, Alyssa Villagas, Earlynn Ngirlamuut, Maria Valencia, Luisa Marie Camacho, and Eddianne Cabrera.

In the battle for third place, Whispering Palms/Brilliant Star defeated Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

In the boys’ finals, Koblerville connected on two headers to avoid a shutout in the championship round and downed Saipan International School, 2-0.

Emerson Feria and Freeman Defang scored for Koblerville in the first half.

Francis Mendiola and Joe Etpison coached the winning Umangs, who were composed of Keoni Borja, Norman Defang, Woo Souk Choi, Finson They, Fredrick Encabao, Franklin Lizama, Peterson Renguul, Glenn Zachras, Kelvin Deleon Guerrero, Kent Kalen, Dexter Walter, Erapsan Kanaka, and



# Okies hand Ghasias first loss

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
rosely\_monroyo@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Okies went 2-for-2 at the continuation of the second round of the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Okies scored a big victory in their first game last weekend, stunning the then undefeated Ghasias Brothers in four sets, 55-45.

Ghasias Brothers won their first three games in the second round, but a shutout in the fourth set of their game against Okies handed the former their first loss in the tournament. The Okies remained unbeaten in the second round



with their 4-0 record.

The Okies drew first blood winning the opening set, 15-13, but Ghasias Brothers swept the next two, 15-12, 17-12 to boost

their bid for a perfect record.

Ghasias Brothers were still leading in the fourth set, 6-0, when they started committing errors allowing Okies to recover and turn the tables en route to an impressive 16-0 triumph.

The Okies had a hard time in their second game, ripping the Islanders after two overtimes, 95-94.

Regulation ended at 78-76 in favor of Okies, but the Islanders won

the fourth set, 15-12. In Rocball, a leading team can only win the game if it also prevails in the fourth set. If not, the game goes to overtime with the leading team needing to win only once to preserve the victory. The trailing squad must prevail in two overtimes to steal the triumph.

In the first set o-kon, the Islanders nailed an 11-6 win to force another overtime. Finally, Okies pulled of a victory with an 11-7 win in the second overtime.

Typhoon Saito of the Okies was the game's heavy hitter with his 31 points. He had five aces, two xunks, seven kees, and one goal.

In other results, the Soul Rebels

avoided elimination after notching their first win in four games following a 57-54 juiced-out triumph over the Naturals.

In the second round, a team to absorb four losses will be ousted. Teams left standing can recruit players from the eliminated teams. The four remaining squads will advance to the semifinals.

Ben Lisua led the Soul Rebels with 27 points on three aces, two xunks, seven kees, and one goal.

In the final game of the night, the Fanians returned to winning form after topping Evenflow, 55-45. John Nekaifes scored 14 points for the Fanians, who had its two-game winning streak snapped by Ghasias Brothers, two weeks ago.

# Freedom Air extends win run to five

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER



Freedom Air zoomed to its fifth win in a many games to gain a share of the lead in the Budweiser 2008 Inter Government/Business Softball League.

A 10-7 triumph over Department of Land and Natural Resources in Thursday night's game at the Capital Hill Ballfield allowed Freedom Air to keep its unbeaten record and tie defending champion Department of Community and Cultural Affairs in the No. 1 spot.

Freedom Air was behind by one run, 6-7, after six complete inning when first baseman Roy Celis connected on a two-run single and pitcher Roque Camacho

blasted a two-run triple at the top of the seventh to give their team the lead, 10-7.

Freedom Air preserved the win, as it played tough defense at the bottom of seventh throwing out DLNR's first three batters. Outfielder Dennis Cruz caught Larry Sebaklim's fly ball, while Freedom Air shortstop Reno Celis made the same defensive stop against DLNR rightfielder Mike Palacios. The game ended after DLNR extra hitter Paul Lisua fled out to centerfield.

Camacho went 4-for-4 at the plate for Freedom Air and scored two runs, while Roy Celis, who nailed a homer in the first inning, went 3-for-4 and had four RBIs.

A six-run bottom of the fifth anchored by Paul Camacho's two-run homer put DLNR in the lead, 7-5, before the team was shut out in the last two innings to drop to a 4-2 record.

## Jets 19, Law & Order 10

In the first game of the night, the Joeten Motors Jets used an eight-run top of the fifth as cushion en route to a 19-10 win over Law & Order.

After four complete innings, Law & Order led by one, 7-6, but Myron Sablan led the Jets' recovery at the top of the fifth hitting a three-run single.

Leftfielder Ben Taisacan also helped in the Jets' comeback, making a two-run homer at the top of the fifth, which ended with Joeten ahead, 14-7.

The Jets never looked back from thereon, as they held Law & Order to only three runs in the last three innings.

J.J. Laniyo was 4-for-4 at the plate for the Jets, scoring four runs, four doubles and four RBIs. Taisacan had five RBIs and was 2-for-3 at-bat.

The Jets improved to a 5-1 record,

while Law & Order absorbed its third loss in five games.

## No Zone 22, Mayor's Office 22

Two days after crushing Hopwood, 30-0, No Zone picked up where it left off whipping the Mayor's Office, 22-9.

Jerry Ayuyu, Ned Norita, Manny Sablan, and Bruce Norita made one homer apiece and combined for 10 RBIs to give No Zone its fourth win in six games.

Mayor's Office was still in the game after six complete innings, as No Zone was ahead by only three, 12-9.

But No Zone saved the best for last recording a 12-run top of the seventh.

Pitcher Carl Hocog was perfect at the plate going 4-for-4. He scored two runs and one triple and had three RBIs.

The Mayor's Office remained winless in six games.

# TDHC to host inter-hotel league



Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino is planning to host the Inaugural Tinian Dynasty Invitational Basketball League in February next year.

TDHC general manager Tom Liu invited his counterparts from Saipan-based hotels last month and said that he wants to duplicate the success of the past stagings of the HANMI Cup on Saipan on Tinian.

"The games will be played every Monday night until a champion is crowned. The tournament is to promote sportsmanship, camaraderie, and friendship in the hospitality industry," he said.

To make the teams' travel to Tinian worthwhile, Liu said, their food, transportation, and hotel accommodations will all be shouldered by TDHC.

He said Tinian Dynasty will also offer a special room rate of \$40 plus 10

percent tax to fans of teams taking part in the competition. Liu said complimentary tickets will also be provided to teams and their supporters.

HANMI Cup coordinator Lito "William" Espino said so far four teams have signified their intention of joining the Monday-only league next year—Hyatt Regency Saipan, Saipan World Resort, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan/Saipan-Grand Hotel, and Aqua Resort Club.

He said because of the Inaugural Tinian Dynasty Invitational Basketball League, he may have to consider putting off the start of the 2009 HANMI Cup to later next year.

After Aqua Resort Club won it all in 2007, the HANMI Cup went through a rollercoaster season in its second year, which saw the combined Fiesta Resort and Spa and Saipan Grand Hotel team taking home the title, to the delight of its fans and employees. (Mark Rabago)

# Ping-pong clinic at GCA today



Ping-pong players on Saipan will team up with their counterparts from Tinian today in conducting a table tennis clinic at the Grace Christian Academy campus up in Navy Hill.

Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association spokesman Budhi Gurung said four club members includ-

ing himself will facilitate the clinic along with three representatives from the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino table tennis club led by TDHC managing director Alfred Yue.

Other MATTA members helping out in the clinic are president Steve Lim, Jean Shi, and Su Yong Dong. Yue, for his part, will be accompanied in the trip to Saipan by Mark Ma and Luke Lu.

Gurung said the clinic will begin at 3:30pm and that they are inviting as many students as possible to attend the event.

"The more players from MATTA the best for the students to learn in the fastest way with different kinds of techniques so that they may represent CNMI for off-island competition in the near future," he said. (MATTA)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants in last year's SSC Jingle Bell Fun Run pose for a group photo at the starting line at Garapan Fishing Base.

# SSC holds Jingle Bell Run tomorrow

The Saipan Swim Club will be holding the 5th Annual Jingle Bell Fun Run tomorrow.

Registration will start 5pm with a \$10 fee. Participants will receive T-shirt, other prizes, and raffle tickets. They will also be given glow stick bracelets and jingle bells.

The 5-kilometer run will begin at



Garapan Fishing Base (across Kristo Rai Church) and will end at the pavilion at Kilili Beach.

For more information, contact Lisa Kimball at 322-7130.

SSC would like to thank the following for supporting this year's fun run:

Pacific Island Club, American Red Cross, Pacific Telecom Inc., Marianas Eye Institute, Saipan Computer Services, PCC Corporation, National Office Supply, Pacific Trading Co., Saipan Shipping Co., Coca Cola Beverage, Hardt Eye Clinic, Saipan Ice & Water Co., Dolphin Wholesale, and McDonald's Saipan. (SSC)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino general manager Tom Liu, third from right, poses with staff and HANMI Cup organizers last week during a planning session for the Inaugural Tinian Dynasty Invitational Basketball League held at the Tinian hotel.





## Okies hand Ghasias first loss

The Okies went 2-for-2 at the continuation of the second round of the 2008-2009 World Organized Rocball Community League Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

## Titans clinch first AFC South title since 2002

The Tennessee Titans aren't about to be distracted by a power outage in their locker room or a struggling opponent.

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28 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008

SAIPAN TRIBUNE



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Koblerville Elementary School players and coaches pose with their championship trophy during the awards ceremony for the U12 league at the Hopwood Junior High School Field Saturday. Joining them are league organizers and NMIFA officials.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

William S. Reyes Elementary School players and coaches pose with organizers of the U12 league and NMIFA officials during the awards ceremony at the Hopwood Junior High School Field Saturday.

# WSR, Koblerville rule U12 league

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER



champions in the Inaugural 2008 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League Saturday at Hopwood Junior High School Field.

WSR took the girls' division title after beating Koblerville's Lady Umangs in a shootout, 2-0.

Mary Jane Rengiil and Gian Rudolph scored against Koblerville.

goalie Angela Achime.

Luisa Marie Camacho was the Lady Kingfishers' goalkeeper and she did a great job against Koblerville's five shooters.

WSR had a chance to take a 1-0 lead in the first half of the title game, but Ru-

dolph's penalty kick was nullified, as one of her teammates stepped on the line.

The Lady Kingfishers were coached by Melissa Dickinson and Ray Aguon. Other members of the team were Almina Deleon Guerrero, Alyssa Benavente,

See WSR on Page 26

William S. Reyes Elementary School and Koblerville Elementary School were crowned

## Rays set championship rematch with Ayuyus

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

Saipan Southern High School was assured of a title defense in the 2008-2009 Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Basketball League following its 90-46 semifinals win over Mt. Carmel School Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Rays halted the Knights' third quarter rally with the former's trapping defense en route to a 44-point blowout win that allowed Southern to set a title rematch with Kagman High School.

The Ayuyus notched the first finals ticket after whipping the MHS Dolphins, 80-66.

Southern was ahead by 12 at halftime, 38-26, and increased the lead to as much as 18 points in the early part of the second half, 44-26.

But Min Seoung Kim single-handedly brought the Knights back into the game, 37-44, making 11 points in the third period before the Rays had a 7-1

See RAYS on Page 26



Southern's Tristan Ecalnea (21) goes up for a shot against Mt. Carmel's Matt Igitol during their semifinals game in the MISO caging Friday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

## All-Stars tie Smash Killers for lead

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER



The Green All-Stars notched a big win in the penultimate round of the 2nd Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament to gain a share of the lead in the eight-team field.

The All-Stars nearly swept the Red

See ALL-STARs on Page 26

Green All-Stars' Ruby Gozon goes to the net to return the shuttlecock to Red Dragon Shuttlers during Day 6 of the 2nd Traders Insurance Badminton Team Tournament Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Staal



Tan



Welch



Wong

## Swimmers are November's best

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

Swimmers dominated the November list of awardees after their impressive showings in the 2008 All Schools Championships at the Kan Pacific



Swimming Pool in Marpi last month.

Garapan Elementary School's Angel Marie Tan and Saipan Inter-

See SWIMMERS on Page 26